NMI

COMICS FEATURE

No. 5
September 1980
$1.50
$1.75 Canada

STEVE ENGLEHART INTERVIEWED!

MARVEL STARTS FILM STUDIO

BUYING ORIGINAL ART FOR FUN AND PROFIT

CONVENTION REPORTS

THE FANDOM ZONE AND MORE!

Investigative report: WHO REALLY DREW THE BATMAN?

STOP!

HOW MUCH ARE YOU LOSING

BY NOT BUYING FROM US??!!

TO CALCULATE HOW MUCH YOU ARE LOSING BY NOT BUYING FROM US—FILL IN AN AMOUNT OF MONEY FOR EACH OF THE POINTS BELOW AND TOTAL YOUR MONTHLY LOSSES!

- TOTAL YOUR EXPENSES OF GOING TO AND FROM YOUR PRESENT PLACE (S) OF PURCHASING NEW COMICS —— (ie) BUS, GAS, PARKING, (ETC.)!
- CALCULATE HOW MUCH TIME YOU MUST SPEND GOING TO YOUR PRESENT PLACES OF PURCHASES AND TIME SPEND LOOKING FOR YOUR MATERIAL —— THEN, MULTIPLY BY HOW MUCH YOUR TIME PER HOUR IS WORTH!
- MULTIPLY THE ABOVE TWO FIGURES — BY THE NUMBER OF TRIPS A MONTH YOU MAKE!
- FIGURE HOW MUCH VALUE IS LOST ON YOUR BOOKS IF YOU ARE FORCED TO BUY LESS THAN MINT COPIES!
- TOTAL HOW MUCH EXTRA YOU'VE SPENT BUYING —ISSUES YOU'VE MISSED AT HIGHER BACK ISSUE PRICES!
- CALCULATE THE AMOUNT LOST BY NOT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE 20% OFF RETAIL THAT WE OFFER TO EVERYONE!
- ADD IN AN AMOUNT APPROXIMATELY EQUAL TO THE AMOUNT OF FRUSTRATION AND AGGRAVATION YOU MOST PRESENTLY PUT UP WITH ——!

NOW THAT YOU'VE TOTALED YOUR LOSSES—ASK YOURSELF WHY YOU ARE NOT BUYING FROM US!

DOUG SULIPA'S COMIC WORLD

AFTER NINE YEARS OF FAITHFUL AND RESPONSIBLE SERVICE (SUCH THAT OUR BACK ISSUE MAILING LIST IS NOW 10,000 STRONG) IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE AN EXPANSION OF OPERATIONS, OUR **NEW COMICS SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE.**

WE CARRY — MARVELS · D.C.S · GOLD KEYS · DISNEYS · HARVEYS · MADS · ARCHIES · CHARLTONS · FAWCETTS · WARRENS · AND · RELATED · FANZINES MAGAZINES · PAPERBACKS · HARDCOVERS · DIGESTS · GROUND LEVEL COMICS AND MUCH MORE. (WHEW)

COMPARE; WE DARE YOU TO FIND A BETTER OFFER THAN THIS!

- **WE GIVE A 20% DISCOUNT ON MOST NEW ITEMS!**
- EVERYTHING IS SECURELY WRAPPED, MAILED FLAT AND SENT IN — MINT — CONDITION!
- TO MEET YOUR NEEDS, WE CARRY ONE OF THE WIDEST AND MOST COMPLETE SELECTIONS AVAILABLE!
- SEND US A STANDING ORDER WITH THE TITLES THAT YOU COLLECT AND NEVER MISS AN ISSUE!
- YOU PAY ONLY EXACT POSTAGE AND A 50¢ HANDING CHARGE — NO HIDDEN FEES!
- WE GUARANTEE SATISFACTION —— IF YOU DECIDE TO DISCONTINUE OUR SERVICE
- WE ISSUE IMMEDIATE CASH REFUNDS —— NO CREDIT SLIP GARBAGE.
- WE DO NOT JUST CLAIM THE ABOVE —— WE DO IT!!!

IN THE CASE OF A ONE-SHOT OR SPECIALTY ITEM YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE SO THAT YOU MAY ORDER THEM IF YOU WISH. EVERYTHING YOU GET WILL BE CURRENT—IN MOST CASES YOU SHOULD GET THEM BEFORE THEY OFFICIALLY HIT THE STANDS.

IN OUR SYSTEM YOU SET UP AN ACCOUNT WITH US WHERE YOU START WITH AN INITIAL DEPOSIT (ESTIMATE YOUR DEPOSIT BY YOUR PLANNED PURCHASES FOR THE NEXT ONE TO TWO MONTHS) AND AS THE ISSUES COME OUT WE WILL SHIP THEM TO YOU AND CHARGE THE AMOUNT OF THE SHIPMENT AGAINST YOUR ACCOUNT. YOU JUST KEEP SENDING MONEY TO KEEP YOUR ACCOUNT AT A LEVEL AND A STATEMENT IS SENT WITH EVERY SHIPMENT SO THAT YOU ALWAYS KNOW WHERE YOUR ACCOUNT STANDS. IF YOUR ACCOUNT RUNS OUT OF FUNDS WE WILL HOLD THE ISSUES FOR YOU UNTIL YOU REPLENISH IT.

SEND YOUR LIST OR WRITE FOR MORE COMPLETE DETAILS. NOW, JOIN THE THOUSANDS OF MY OTHER SATISFIED CUSTOMERS AND SAVE MONEY AT THE SAME TIME. NO ORDER IS TOO LARGE OR TOO SMALL. START YOUR OWN COMICS CLUB AND QUALIFY FOR THE DEALERS RATE.

DEALERS
WE WHOLESALE AT 30⅓ OFF (PLUS EXACT POSTAGE) TO ANYONE WHO ORDERS $60.00 A MONTH (RETAIL) ON A REGULAR BASIS · WRITE FOR DETAILS

DOUG SULIPA
(THE MAN HIMSELF!)

DREAMS EDGE ·BOX 174 ·POSTAL STATION C ·WINNIPEG, MANITOBA ·CANADA (R3M 3S7)

No. 5 Contents Sept. 1980

COMICS FEATURE

3
Opening Notes
Editorial by Dean Mullaney

5
Headlines
compiled by Peter Sanderson
Marvel sets up own production company in Hollywood . . .Englehart and Rogers re-united . . .Infantino back at DC.

12
Comics Feature Interview: Steve Englehart
One of the most popular and successful comics writers of the 70s discusses his new career as a novelist, his past successes and his future comics plans with Marshall Rogers.

36
The Silver Age of Comics: Part IV
by Murry R. Ward
The year is 1963 and DC strenthens their superhero universe and Marvel premieres *Spider-Man, Dr. Strange* and many other superheroes.

43
The Fandom Zone
Fandom Almanac
Details about comics clubs in your area and apas to join. Plus summer convention highlights.

Trufan Confessions
column by Jay Zilber
"What this convention needs . . ." Some thoughts on the state of comics conventions these days.

54
Who Draws Batman?
by Gene Reed
An investigative report on the many uncredited artists who have drawn the Batman since the 1940s.

58
Guilty Fantasies
column by Peter B. Gillis
It seems as though the fantasies are getting even guiltier—this time Superman is going to commit suicide and visits Mr. Gillis before taking the plunge!

60
Collecting
There's Nothing Like the Real Thing
by Richard Howell
Collecting original art for fun, profit or both.

62
Comic Strips
When Worlds Collide
by Carol B. Kalish
The trials and tribulations of Barnaby, Donald Leisk's wonderful strip of the 1940s.

64
End Notes
column by Peter Sanderson
Red Kryptonite invades new comics!

Editor and Art Director
Dean Mullaney

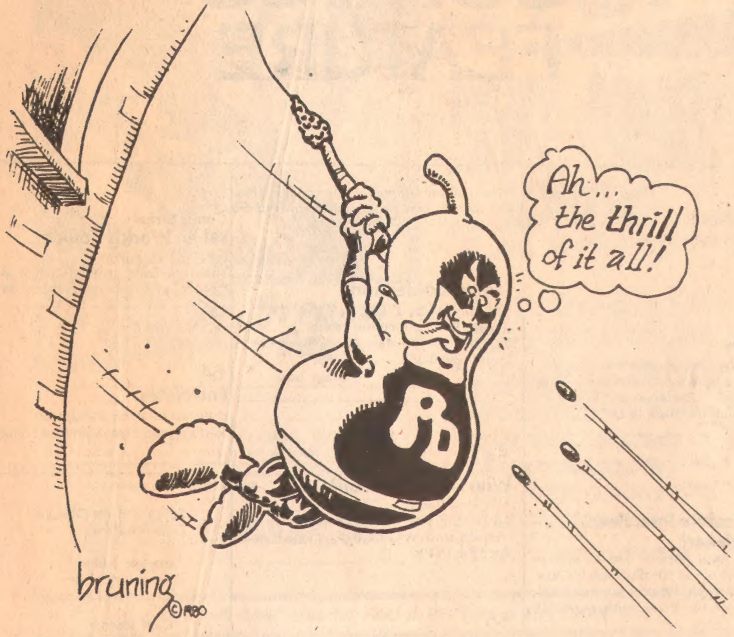
Associate Editor
Peter J. Sanderson

Contributors:
Richard Bruning
Eddie Cline
Peter B. Gillis
Richard Howell
Carol B. Kalish
Frederick Marcus
Mitch O'Connell
David Patterson
William Reinhold
Gene Reed
Peter Sanderson
Murray R. Ward
Jay Zilber

cover by Mitch O'Connell
colored by Eddie Cline

COMICS FEATURE (ISSN 0199-7459) is published monthly by New Media Publishing Co., 301 Graham Drive, Clearwater, FL 33515. Controlled circulation paid at Clearwater, FL. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to COMICS FEATURE © 1980 New Media Publishing Co. Cover characters © 1980 Marvel Comics Group, a Division of Cadence Industries Coporation.

Subscribe to COMICS FEATURE and get a positive outlook towards comics!



In-depth interviews, news exclusives, comprehensive articles, expert columnists, art analysis, previews, the Fandom Zone, reviews and more!

Yes! I appreciate *Comics Feature's* positive attitude! Please send me 12 issues for only $12.00.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

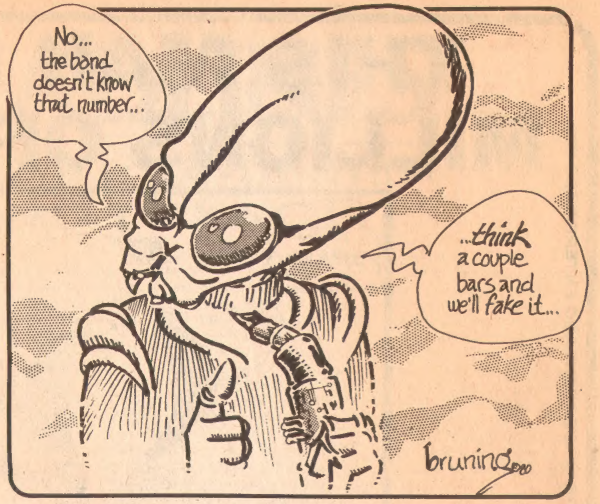
State _____ Zip _____

Subscribe today and save one-third off the cover price! Just send this coupon or facsimile to:

NEW MEDIA IRJAX
PINELLAS CENTER FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
12345 STARKEY RD., LARGO, FL 33543

OPENING NOTES

Editorial by Dean Mullaney



Beginning with the next issue, *Comics Feature* will undergo a change in editors. After five issues of editing this magazine, I've had quite a lot of fun, met quite a number of people and have guided *Feature* from an idea in publisher Hal Schuster's head to the most comprehensive magazine about comics available. We've gained a large audience who appreciate *Feature*'s unbiased reporting, news exclusives, our reports on the history of comics, collecting, and the Fandom Zone. We've shown that there's a lot more to comics than personality interviews laden with pot shots at everyone in the industry. It's been a rewarding experience for me, and I hope for you as well.

Why am I stepping down as editor? Time, or more precisely, lack of it. As many of you know, I've been the publisher and editor of my own publishing company, Eclipse Enterprises, for the past three years. All of Eclipse publications have been well received, critically and commercially, and Eclipse is in the process of expansion. And that means a full time devotion to Eclipse's own efforts. That is where my future lies: expanding the Eclipse line and continuing to present the best writers and artists in comics in the finest available packages.

And so I take my leave of *Feature*, and I'd like to thank a number of people whose involvement has made editing this magazine a fun experience: Hal Schuster, whose support and enthusiasm gave me the chance to do the kind of magazine I wanted to see; Peter Sanderson, who's added more to the literary tone of this magazine than any other individual; Rich Bruning and Meloney Crawford who've been my constant advisors; Jay Zilber who's given me a lot of feedback and helped design the Fandom Zone section; the people at our typesetters, Brooklyn Bridge Publication, who've performed work above and beyond the call of duty; and also, our many contributors: Peter Gillis, Murray R. Ward, Mitch O'Connell, Gene Reed, and all the others. I'd also like to point out Fred Marcus for his help in setting up and co-conducting some of the interviews. Many people have contributed in various respects to *Feature* and all of them deserve a hearty round of applause.

Beginning next issue Peter Gillis will take over as editor and he tells me that he's got a lot of new tricks in store for *Feature*. I personally look forward to his tenure on *Feature* and think you will too.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of you who've bought and supported this magazine through the first five issues, and I trust you'll continue to support it with Peter as editor.

Thanks again, everyone, and take it easy.

Best wishes,

Dean Mullaney

Dean Mullaney

ENTIRE CONTENTS © 1980 FANTACO ENTERPRISES INC.

THIS MAN HAS MILLIONS OF FANS

John Caldwell's Zany Cartoons are the Highlight of Best Selling Publications such as *NATIONAL LAMPOON, ESQUIRE, and OUI.* His hefty new collection will be available September 30 from FANTACO PUBLICATIONS

PRODUCT INFORMATION

DELUXE COLOR COATED CARDBOARD COVERS
64 INTERIOR PAGES ON 50 LB. WHITE PAPER
FULL MAGAZINE SIZE — $2.95 COVER PRICE
SHIPPING DATE: SEPTEMBER 30, 1980

***Special preview copies of* MUG SHOTS *will be on sale at FANTACON, September 27 & 28 at the* Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany, N.Y.**

DEALER AND DISTRIBUTOR RATES ON REQUEST

SINGLE COPIES $2.95 + 75¢ postage (Total $3.70)

MUG SHOTS is published and distributed by:

THE FANTACO CORPORATION
21 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12210
(518) 463-1400

HEADLINES

MARVEL FORMS OWN FILM PRODUCTION CO.

Marvel Comics has announced the formation of Marvel Productions Ltd., in association with David DePatie, formerly of DePatie-Freleng, who produced the *Fantastic Four* and *Spider Woman* cartoons, and is best known for its work on the *Pink Panther* cartoons.

According to James Galton, Marvel Entertainment president, "Many of our characters have enjoyed—and are currently enjoying—television and motion picture successes via joint ventures with other producers. While these projects have proven to be extremely gratifying for all concerned, we are looking forward to taking the reins for the development of our own properties as well as sharing our expertise with other suppliers."

The new company will be involved in television, film and animation projects of its own characters in addition to working with other producers.

Marvel Productions plans to offer "good family entertainment," and according to the *Hollywood Reporter* (June 19), "twenty developmental presentations for Saturday morning cartoons, prime time specials and pilots" are in the works. In addition, preproduction work on a *Swan Lake* television special is being undertaken, according to statements made by Marvel editor-in-chief Jim Shooter at this year's Chicago Comicon. Shooter also announced that Marvel Productions will be preparing a *Pink Panther* special.

According to Shooter, one of the reasons for the new company is that no Marvel characters were licensed for television this year, and that in the future, all such production will be done by Marvel Productions. Galton, quoted in the *Hollywood Reporter*, states, "Unlike any other studio, we have the foundation of the artists and writers at Marvel Comics," to which Stan Lee added: "We had to create Marvel Productions to take advantage of all this creative ability waiting to be unleashed." Lee further states, "Whatever the public wants, we can provide."

The new studio, located in California, has established a working relationship, described as "co-producing" by DePatie, with Toei Animation Co., Ltd., the largest animation studio in the world.

In addition to the animation work, Oscar Meyer and Owens Corning have signed with Marvel Productions to produce a series of commercials, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*. There is also talk that the new company may co-produce a new Black Edwards film based on a children's story by Julie Andrews. Marvel Productions is also working on animated sequences for Edward's *S.O.B.* production.

Summing up how the company will further promote the Marvel characters, sales representative Marshall Karp states in the *Hollywood Reporter*: "We don't expect to do much more licensing for TV, but for film, if the financing is beyond our scope, then we will.

ENGLEHART & ROGERS REUNITED

Steve Englehart and Marshall Rogers will be working together again for a new magazine planned by Eclipse Enterprises. Englehart and Rogers intend to produce between sixty and one hundred twenty pages per year for Eclipse.

The new Eclipse magazine, entitled appropriately enough *Eclipse*, will be a bi-monthly, and other talents already lined up include Don McGregor, Steve Gerber, Chris Claremont, Jim Starlin and others. Exact details of the size and price of the magazine are not as yet determined but Eclipse informs us that details will be set within the month.

Englehart and Rogers, who achieved great success with their interpretation of the Batman, are working on two series concepts for Eclipse. One is a two-part story originally written for DC as a follow-up to the *Madame Xanadu* story Englehart and Rogers did a few years ago for *Doorway to Nightmare*. Englehart has withdrawn the new story from DC and he and Rogers will suitably alter it for *Eclipse* and copyright it in their own names. DC will still do a *Madame Xanadu* mini-series utilizing the original Englehart-Rogers story, but will assign parts two and three to different writers and artists. (For full details on the Englehart/DC story, see this issue's interview.)

In related Eclipse news, Don McGregor and Marshall Rogers' *Detectives, Inc.* has been released, and *Stewart the Rat* by Steve Gerber, Gene Colan and Tom Palmer is now set for a September release.

MARVEL TO USE TV COMMERCIAL

Marvel Comics is planning to produce a television commercial about itself which will be made available to local comics distributors to run on their local stations at their own expense. According to Marvel's Mike Friedrich, the commercial will probably simply have Stan Lee talking about Marvel Comics. At the end there will be a five to eight second space in which the local distributor can run its own name. The commercial may be done with the facilities of Marvel's new animation studio (see separate story).

Marvel is also planning what Friedrich terms "a cooperative advertising program" such as book publishing companies have. Under this program if a comics specialty shop runs an ad in a newspaper or magazine, Marvel will cover part of the ad's cost and also supply a kit containing photostats of Marvel characters and logos that could be used in the advertising.

Furthermore, Marvel will be furnishing bumper stickers plugging comics to distributors, probably, Friedrich says, in conjunction with DC. One sticker would read something like: COMICS—THE NORTH AMERICAN ARTFORM (thereby pleasing potential customers in both the United States and Canada). Marvel would probably pay for any Marvel stickers sent to the distributors itself. They would not be sold directly to fans.

Headlines

FLASH! INFANTINO RETURNS

The rumor reported in our previous issue has been confirmed: Carmine Infantino, who pencilled the classic Silver Age *Flash* stories of the late fifties and sixties, has returned to the book. His first story will be in issue 296, and will team the Flash with another character Infantino drew for years at DC, the Elongated Man. Following stories will bring back Captain Cold and team up the Shade with the Rainbow Raider. According to *Flash* editor Len Wein, the three hundredth issue of the title will have a twenty-five page story that has "everybody" in it. Bob Smith will be Infantino's regular inker on *The Flash*, and Infantino will be doing the book's cover as well.

Infantino will be returning to other old series of his as well. It has also been confirmed that he is drawing an *Adam Strange* story that Murphy Anderson will ink. He is pencilling a *Batman* story for *Detective* 500 (see separate story) and a Batman-Firestorm team-up for *Brave and the Bold*. He is even doing a new *Space Museum* tale written by Gerry Conway for *Mystery in Space*.

Infantino will continue as regular penciller for Marvel's *Star Wars* as well (see Short Subjects).

HEAVY METAL FORECAST

The October issue of *Heavy Metal* is its "Rock Special" featuring "Rock City" by Moebius, "Trashman, Agent of the Sixth International" by Spain, "The Legend of the Magic Tone Box" by Angus McKie, "Heartbreak Hotel" by Dick Matena, "Space Jive" by Voss, "Lead Guitar" by Druillet, "Worlds Apart" by Tom Yeates, "The Theft of the Golden Hit" by Hé, the brief "Rock a la Mickxon," and "Jopo De Pojo" by Joost Swarte. Most of the regular *Heavy Metal* serials will be absent from this issue, but there will be special rock-oriented installments of Matt Howarth's *Changes* and, of course, *Rock Opera*. The usual columns will appear, but will deal with subjects related to rock.

The November issue contains the conclusion of Bilal's *Progress*, "What is Reality, Papa?" by Ribera and Goddard, which is a sequel to their serial *The Alchemist Supreme* utilizing the same principal characters; the next installment of *Changes*; the penultimate chapter of *Professor Thintwhistle* by Stiles and Lupoff; "Metropolitan Opera" by Caza; "Blind Citadel" by Jean Giraud; "Sans Family" by Claveloux; "The Soothsayer and the Dictator" by Poirier; and "Red Beard and the Brain Pirate" by Moebius. The front cover will be by Japanese artist Hajime Sorayama and the back cover by Chris Achilleos.

DETECTIVE COMICS' SPECTACULAR ANNIVERSARY

The five hundredth issue of *Detective Comics*, the first comic book ever to run wholly new material done specifically for comic books, and the magazine from whose initials DC took its name, will be a square-bound 80-page issue featuring some very unusual and special material.

Walter Gibson, the creator of the Shadow, one of the inspirations for the Batman, will write an eight page *Batman* text story for the issue. This is not Gibson's first encounter with the character: he also wrote some *Batman* stories in the 1940s. The Kubert School's Tom Yeates will provide illustrations.

It is possible that Harlan Ellison may do a *Batman* story inspired by race riots in Chicago a number of years ago. Ellison has been planning to do this story for at least seven years. If it appears in *Detective* 500 it will be edited by Julius Schwartz (Paul Levitz edits the rest of the issue) and the book will be expanded to 96 pages to accommodate it.

Joe Kubert, who drew many classic *Hawkman* stories in the 1940s and 1960s, will illustrate a new eight-page *Hawkman* adventure by Paul Levitz entitled "The Strange Death of Dr. Erdel." Longtime readers will recall that Dr. Erdel built the teleportation machine that brought former *Detective* co-star and Justice League member J'onn J'onzz, the Martian Manhunter to Earth. The machine then exploded, killing Erdel. In this new story Hawkman discovers that the explosion was no accident and tracks down Erdel's murderer.

Carmine Infantino returns to drawing the Batman and Robin in a story guest-starring Deadman in which Batman is killed and comes back as a ghost to solve his own murder. Cary Bates wrote the story and Bob Smith will ink it.

Walt Simonson and Len Wein will collaborate on a two-page *Batman* segment for the issue.

Wein has also written a story illustrated by Jim Aparo, "The Too Many Crooks Caper," which stars most of the other detectives who had long-running series in *Detective*: Slam Bradley (his first story in thirty years), TV detective Roy Raymond, the Human Target, Jason Bard, Mysto, Pow-Wow Smith and Captain Compass.

Television writer Alan Brennert, who is story editor on the *Buck Rogers* TV show and who did some *Wonder Woman* TV scripts, scripted the lead feature, "To Kill a Legend," pencilled and inked by Dick Giordano. In it, Batman saves the Thomas and Martha Wayne of an alternate Earth from being murdered by Joe Chill.

The Elongated Man meets Edgar Allen Poe, the first detective story writer, in a story by Mike W. Barr and Jose Garcia Lopez.

The issue's wraparound cover will be laid out by Kubert and feature work by all of the interior artists. The book will sell for $1.50.

THE RAW FACTS

The first issue of *Raw*, the comics magazines discussed by its co-editors Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly in our previous issue, was released in July. Its contents include "Can It Be Done" by Gross and Winter, "Hommages Posthumes" by Alfred Jarry and Bruno Richard, "Corpus Delecti" by Geoff Robison, "Vamp Dance" by Kaz, "Manhattan" by Jacques Tardi, "I'll Play the Blues for You" by Joost Swarte, "Jack Survives" by Jerry Moriarty, "Mutton Geoff" by Mark Newgarden, "Fifi Gaga Magazine" by Bazooka, "Two-Fisted Painters" by Spiegelman, "He Turned, Saw Me, Waved His Arm, Continued," by Patricia Claire and James Barth, "Not Dreams" by Lynne Tillman and Mariscal, "The Andy Griffith Show" by Josh Alan Friedman and Drew Friedman, "One Panel from the Basis of Make-Up" by Heinz Ernigholz, "Drawn over Two Weeks while on the Phone," by Spiegelman, "Four Supermarkets in Iowa" by David Marc and Gary Hallgren, "Piquer, Lucas and Fermin" by Mariscal, "Industry News and Review" by Mouly, "Canal Street" by Gerry Capelle, "Cartoon Movies" by George Griffin, "Los Garriris" by Mariscal, and an example of the Winsor McCay classic *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend*.

Headlines

NEWLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

Of Mice and Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons by Leonard Maltin (McGraw Hill, $19.95 through 12/31/80, $24.95 thereafter). A history of every cartoon studio from the 1920s through the early 1960s, including Disney, Warners, MGM, Fleischer, Lantz, UPA and others, with discussions of individual cartoons of note and a filmography of every short cartoon produced by the studios.

The American Animated Cartoon by Gerald and Danny Peary (Dutton paperback, $10.95). An anthology of critical and historical essays about American animated cartoons, including interviews with Ralph Bakshi, Mel Blanc, William Hanna, John and Faith Hubley, Chuck Jones, Walter Lantz and Robert McKimson.

City by Will Eisner (Hollybrook Graphics, $17.50). Not a book, but a portfolio of scenes of urban life, with accompanying texts.

Detectives, Inc.: A Remembrance of Threatening Green, a new graphic novel by Don McGregor and Marshall Rogers (Eclipse Enterprises, $6.95).

The Spirit: 300 More Dailies featuring work by Lou Fine and Jack Cole (Ken Pierce, $5.95).

Lady Luck by Klaus Nordling (Ken Pierce, $5.95). Sixteen complete backup stories featuring Lady Luck from *Spirit* newspaper sections from 1946, mostly by Klaus Nordling but with some by Fred Schwab. Another *Lady Luck* book is already in preparation, to be edited by Cat Yronwode.

The Amazing Spider-Man #2 by Stan Lee and John Romita (Pocket Books, $2.50). Newspaper strips featuring the Rattler and the Kingpin's campaign to be mayor of New York City.

The Incredible Hulk #1 by Stan Lee and Larry Lieber (Tempo Books, $1.75). Newspaper strip reprints.

The World Encyclopedia of Cartoons edited by Maurice Horn with Rick Marschall as assistant editor, in two volumes (Chelsea House, $50.00 per set). Covers animated cartoons and cartoons outside comic strip or comic book formats.

Animated Features and Silly Symphonies, introduction by Alan Dean Foster (Abbeville Press, $19.95). Reprints of newspaper comic strip adaptations of classic Disney feature-length cartoons from *Snow White* to *Alice in Wonderland*, along with strip adaptations of Disney cartoon shorts, most notably *The Three Little Pigs* and its sequels.

Splitsville by Frank Baginski and Reynolds Dodson (Hawthorn Books, $4.95). A collection from the strip that features only characters who have been divorced.

An Elephant is Soft and Mushy by S. Gross (Dodd, Mead & Co., $6.95). A collection of work from the cartoonist for the *National Lampoon* and *New Yorker*.

MARVEL MAGAZINES

Howard the Duck becomes a quarterly as of issue 8, and the book is now looking for a new regular writer. Bill Mantlo is leaving the book due to disagreements with editor Lynn Graeme over the direction it should take. His last stories will be in issue 9: "Do-Do That Voodoo," set in New Orleans during the Mardi Gras and involving former *Avengers* villain The Black Talon, and an interlude story in which Howard walks out on Beverly. The third story will be a parody of 1940s detective stories by Steve Skeates entitled "The Linoleum Lizard." All three tales are pencilled by Gene Colan.

Denny O'Neil begins collaborating on *Howard* stories with issue 10. He will do a parody of horror movies for *Howard* with Skeates, and two other *Duck* stories in collaboration with Jim Shooter. However, at present O'Neil does not intend to become regular writer on the book.

Walt Simonson is writing and drawing a project called *Star-Slammers* for the Marvel Magazine department, which will probably appear as a one-shot full-color Marvel Super-Special. It comprises several short stories leading to a long one, all about another world populated by warlike mercenaries.

Bill Mantlo's book-length story for *Marvel Preview*, entitled *Paradox*, has been rechristened *Enigma* since an alternative comics company has already trademarked the original name. Val Mayerik will do all the art on the story: pencils, inks and tones.

Noted British comics artist John Bolton will draw and ink an original book-length *Kull* story by Doug Moench for *Marvel Preview*, "Demon in a Silvered Glass." There is a possibility that *Preview* may go bimonthly.

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

8 MORE THRILL-PACKED PAGES!
50¢
SUPERMAN
I KNOW YOU'RE POSITIVE IT WAS THAT KOLA YOU SUPERMAN!
BUT AS YOU SEE, WAS A DOUBLE NEGATIVE EFFECT!
EXTRA! INTRODUCING THE NAME OF ACTUALLY THE NAME OF SUPERMAN, 2030!

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

Short Subjects

DC

- *Unknown Soldier* 248 begins a two-part story that finally reveals the Soldier's true origin. The first new *Madmoiselle Marie* solo story in twenty years serves as the backup for issue 249, and Sgt. Rock, the Haunted Tank crew, the Losers and Mademoiselle Marie all guest star with the Unknown Soldier in the 25-page story in issue 250.
- The Earth-2 Joker fights the Huntress in a future backup story for *Wonder Woman*. Meanwhile, Wonder Woman contends with Kobra in a three-part story beginning in issue 276.
- DC's Israeli superhero the Seraph stars in a solo backup story in *Super-Friends* 41.
- Dave Cockrum will draw the *War That Time Forgot* story for *Weird War Tales* 98.
- Paul Levitz and Karen Berger become co-editors of *House of Mystery* with issue 292.
- Batman teams up with the Green Lantern and the Green Lantern Corps in *Brave and the Bold* 173 and 174.
- Adam Strange's wife Alanna finally appears on Earth in "Alanna's New York Adventure" in the back of *Green Lantern* 138. Future stories will take Adam Strange on a quest through Alpha Centauri's solar system "and beyond."
- Hawkman returns to his home planet Thanagar in an upcoming *World's Finest*.
- Jim Starlin will draw the *Firestorm* stories in *Flash* 294—296. New DC penciller Denys Cowan takes over *Firestorm* the following issue.
- In *Brave and the Bold* Batman will be meeting Scalphunter during the Civil War.
- After a long delay, *I, Vampire*, drawn by Tom Sutton and written by J.M. DeMatteis, will start appearing in *House of Mystery* with issue 290.
- In *DC Comics Presents* 30 readers will learn "Whatever Happened to the Golden Age Atom?" A future issue will deal with the present whereabouts of Mark Merlin and Prince Ra-Man.
- The so-called "imaginary stories" have returned to *Superman* in the form of the backup series *Just Imagine*, which alternates with *World of Krypton* and *Superman 2020*, Cary Bates' stories about Superman's grandson.

MARVEL

- The projected Daredevil-Wolverine team-up by Chris Claremont and Frank Miller that was to serve as the backup for *Marvel Team-Up* 100 will be replaced by a Storm-Black Panther team-up by Claremont and John Byrne.
- Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson collaborate once again on *Star Wars* 50. Between the end of the adaptation of *The Empire Strikes Back* and then, there will be stories written by Goodwin, Larry Hama, Roger McKenzie, J. Marc deMatteis and Mike Barr. Carmine Infantino drew all of these stories and will continue to pencil *Star Wars* while fulfilling his many new DC commitments as well (see separate story). No regular writer for the book has yet been selected.
- Frank Miller is now writing as well as drawing *Daredevil*.
- The second half of the upcoming Yellow Claw story in *Avengers* was plotted by Bob Budiansky with Jim Shooter.
- Frank Miller will pencil and Terry Austin will ink all four of the *Doctor Who* covers for *Marvel Premiere*.
- Daredevil guest stars in a story by Roger McKenzie for *Thor* 304.
- Baron Blood returns in *Captain America* 254.
- British comedian Benny Hill is the star of *Marvel Super-Special* 18, edited by Larry Hama.
- Michael Fleisher wrote the lead story for *Savage Sword of Conan* 60. John Buscema pencilled the tale.
- Angar the Screamer returns is *Spider-Woman* 35, by Chris Claremont, Steve Leialoia and Jim Mooney.
- Baron Karza is resurrected in *Micronauts* 26.
- John Buscema both pencilled and inked *Conan* 119.
- Hellcat and the Man-Wolf guest-star in *She-Hulk* 13.
- David Michelinie sets Taskmaster against Spider-Man and Ant-Man in *Marvel Team-Up* 102.
- El Aguila, the Hispanic swashbuckler from *Power Man*, will receive his own *Marvel Spotlight* story by Mary Jo Duffy and Dave Cockrum.
- Chris Claremont will script a three-part *Daughter of the Dragon* adventure (starring Colleen Wing and Misty Knight) for *Marvel Premiere*.
- Al Milgrom's forthcoming 32-page "no ads" comic is now tentatively titled *Fanfare*. Marshall Rogers and Chris Claremont have just done a *Dr. Strange* story for the book, and the first issue will feature Spider-Man, the Avengers and the Hulk in an adventure by Bill Mantlo and Rich Buckler.
- Upcoming guest stars in *Marvel Team-Up* include Spider-Woman, Nighthawk, Power Man (with the Hulk instead of Spider-Man), Moon Knight and Doc Samson.
- The Wrecker and the Wrecking Crew return in a future issue of *Thor*.
- Jim Starlin is doing a Marvel "album" for the specialty shop market in which Captain Marvel dies. Jim Shooter suggested the idea to Starlin because he felt it was too complicated trying to explain who the current Captain Marvel is after the many changes in his series. After this Captain Marvel's demise, Marvel Comics will then create a new character with that name. The book should appear before Starlin's specialty shop sequel to *Metamorphosis Odyssey* for Marvel.
- A number of stories are being planned for *Power Man/Iron Fist* that will explain whether the people we have been told are Iron Fist's uncle, father and sister are really who they claim to be, whether Iron Fist's father is really dead, why the villainous Master Khan

© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

Short Subjects

wants vengeance on Iron Fist's homeland of K'un-L'un, and what the plant people outside K'un L'un are doing there.

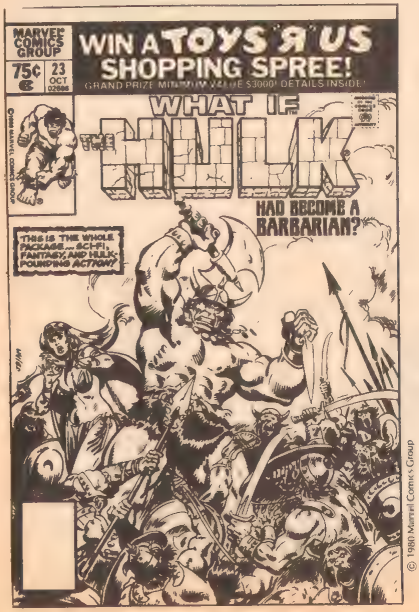
- Bob Layton takes over doing the covers for *Rom* as of issue 15.
- Plans for Marvel's *James Bond* book are currently stalled due to problems that have arisen with the producers of the *Bond* films.
- In Marvel's forthcoming specialty shop book devoted to Patrick McGoohan's classic television series *The Prisoner*, the story written and pencilled by Jack Kirby will be inked and colored by Walt Simonson and the story written by Steve Englehart and pencilled by Gil Kane will be inked by Steve Leialoia. Both stories are adaptations of the same episode from the television series the one in which Number Six arrives at the Village, and both were done several years ago as possible first issues for a projected regular *Prisoner* comic. Al Milgrom is editing the book, as well as the coming *Superman-Spider-Man* team-up.
- The Fantastic Four will be acquiring a new regular writer in the near future.

GENERAL

- The next issue of the Kitchen Sink *Spirit* magazine will contain "Sand and Oil," featuring Sand Seref, which is the first chapter of the seven-part "Jewel of Ghiza" sequence of which five other parts have already been reprinted; a brand new three-page non-*Spirit* story by Eisner entitled "The Public Interest," which concerns itself with the safety of nuclear power plants; a *Spirit* story involving Coot Gallus and an election; a pre-war story in which the Spirit is captured by the underworld, the next four-page Wally Wood "moon" story, and the next to last installment of *Life on Another Planet*. The covers reproduce two *Spirit* splash pages, one by Eisner and the other by Lou Fine, both newly airbrushed by underground artist Leslie Cabarga. The Eisner art book now in preparation has finally been named: appropriately enough, it will be *The Art of Will Eisner 1933–1980*.
- Archival Press, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has obtained the United States publishing rights to Peter O'Donnell's *Modesty Blaise* prose novels. They will publish *The Silver Mistress* in October, to be followed by *Last Day in Limbo* in the spring. Each of the novels will have illustrations; the first boasts twenty full-page illustrations by Enrique Romero, longtime artist on the *Blaise* comic strip.
- Tex Avery, director of so many classic Warners and MGM cartoons from the 1930s into the 1950s, is now directing *Dino and the Cave Mouse*, a regular segment for Saturday morning television's *Flintstones Comedy 90* this fall, while Jack Kirby is doing designs for a new *Space Ghost* episodes for another Hanna-Barbera Saturday morning show, *The Space Stars*.
- Fred Hembeck's third magazine has been released and is entitled *Abbot & Costello Meet the Bride of Hembeck*. Published by Fantaco Enterprises, the magazine is 24 pages and sells for $1.25, and can be ordered from Fantaco, 21 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210 with 50¢ for postage.
- Ramona Fradon, long time comics artist associated with DC, will be taking over the art assignment on *Brenda Starr*. Dale Messick, creator of the strip, will continue to write.

© 1980 Chicago Tribune/New York News

- Joe Kubert is writing and drawing a strip being devised by King Features syndicate based on the *Rocky* movies.
- Will Eisner's creation Connie, a seductive woman who has long been demonstrating methods of preventive maintenance in cartoon segments of the U.S. Army magazine *PS*, has recently been condemned for her "overt sexual orientation" by U.S. Senator Proxmire, according to the June 22, 1980 issue of *The Washington Post Magazine*. Apparently Connie will still be allowed to appear in PS, but she will be costumed more modestly.
- John Huston, director of films ranging from *The Maltese Falcon* in the 1940s to the last year's *Wise Blood*, will be the director of the film version of the Broadway musical *Annie*, which in turn loosely based upon Harold Gray's strip. Albert Finney will portray Oliver "Daddy" Warbucks, and it has been reported that Punjab and the Asp will be portrayed in the film despite their absence in the stage musical.



MARVEL COMICS

The following comics bear a ***February*** cover date and will be on sale in ***November*** (October shipping schedule)

GHOST RIDER #53 — Script by MICHAEL FLEISHER. Art by DON PERLIN. The fury of the She-Witch!

MACHINE MAN #19 — Story by TOM DeFALCO. Art by STEVE DITKO. There's havoc on Halloween as Machine Man meets the challenge of Jack O' Lantern!

MOON KNIGHT #3 — Written by DOUG MOENCH. Pencils by BILL SIENKIEWICZ. "Midnight Means Murder!" pits Moonie against an art thief whose motives are more *sinister* than mere greed!

PETER PARKER #51 — Written by ROGER STERN. Art by MARIE SEVERIN and BRUCE PATTERSON. What is the uncanny secret of Spider-Man's alien foes? And how does *Mysterio* fit into the picture?

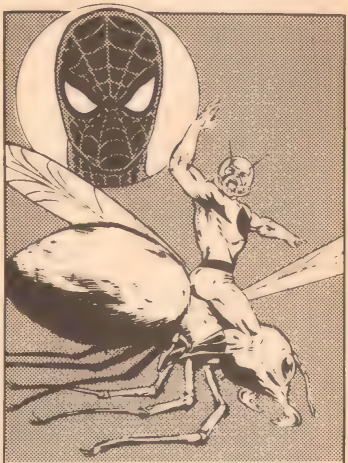
POWER MAN AND IRON FIST #67 — Script by MARY JO DUFFY. Pencils by KERRY GAMMILL. Inks by JOHN D'AGOSTINO. Luke Cage falls into the clutches of Bushmaster, another super-powered being created by Noah Burstein (the Doc responsible for Power Man's own super-abilities)! Only Bushmaster's *more powerful* than Cage!

SPIDER-WOMAN #35 — Written by CHRIS CLAREMONT. Art by STEVE LEIALOHA and JIM MOONEY. Spider-Woman faces the most difficult decision of her life — not to mention madness or death (some choice!) at the hands of Angar the Screamer!

WHAT IF #25 — You've got a date with the Watcher to explore an untapped alternate destiny of a *special* Marvel super-star. Don't be late.

STAR TREK #11 — Written by MARTIN PASKO. Pencils by JOE BROZOWSKI. Stranger — and deadlier — than the legendary V'ger is *Icarus*, the living ship gone mad! And the Enterprise crew may have to sacrifice itself to stop this aberration from destroying a galaxy!

DOCTOR STRANGE #45 — Written by CHRIS CLAREMONT. Pencils by GENE COLAN. Inks by DAN GREEN. Doc must battle demons in his sanctum's basement — while outraged reporters wait on the floors above to ask the one question he *dare* not answer!



MARVEL TEAM-UP #102 — Written by DAVID MICHELINE with art by JERRY BINGHAM and MIKE ESPOSITO. The mysterious *Task master* — trainer and supplier of thugs and cronies to super villains who fought the Avengers to a standstill — pulls out all the stops in his epic battle against **Spider-Man** and the astonishing ***Ant Man***.

INCREDIBLE HULK #256 — Story by BILL MANTLO. Art by SAL BUSCEMA. Like the fruit whose name she bears, the ***Sabra*** is dangerous to touch — especially for the Hulk! Don't miss Greenskin's battle in Tel Aviv with Israel's first super-heroine!

ROM #15 — Written by BILL MANTLO. Art by SAL BUSCEMA. It's wedding bells for Brandy Clark — but she's marrying a *Dire Wraith!* Yow!

SAVAGE SHE-HULK #13 — Script by DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT. Art by MIKE VOSBURG and DANNY BULANADI. Guest-stars ***Hellcat*** and ***Man-Wolf*** join the She-Hulk to battle strange creatures from another world!

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #213 — Story by DENNY O'NEIL. Art by JOHN ROMITA, JR. The Web-slinger at his best — fighting the worst!

SGT. FURY #182 — Written by GARY FRIEDRICH. Art by DICK AYERS and JOHN SEVERIN. Reprints Sgt. Fury #68. Fury's furlough in New York. Another vacation like this and he'll be dead!

MICRONAUTS #26 — Story by BILL MANTLO. Art by PAT BRODERICK and ARMANDO GIL. It's war between Hydra and SHIELD — With the Micronauts caught in the middle! And — just for the heck of it — Baron Karza comes to Earth!

STAR WARS #44 — Written by ARCHIE GOODWIN. Art by AL WILLIAMSON and CARLOS GARZON. At last! The final chapter of ***The Empire Strikes Back!*** Features material not contained in the super special, the treasury or the paperback.

CONAN #119 — Written by J.M. DeMATTEIS. Pencils *and inks* by JOHN BUSCEMA. Conan must battle a sinister magician to win the respite of eternal rest for the undead soul of his grandfather!

Adve

COMING ATTRACTIONS

DEFENDERS #92 — Script by J.M. DeMATTEIS. Art by DON PERLIN and PABLO MARCOS. If you think ***Eternity*** is the one entity who'd never need anybody's help... think again! The Defenders must come to his aid — or the universe dies!

X-MEN #142 — Written by CHRIS CLAREMONT. Art by JOHN BYRNE and TERRY AUSTIN. Showdown with the new Brotherhood of Evil Mutants to save the life of the mutant-hating Senator Kelly.

MARVEL SUPER-ACTION #28 — Re-presenting Avengers #67 written by ROY THOMAS with art by BARRY SMITH and GEORGE KLEIN. The vengearice of Ultron-6! Plus: ***Marvel U.K.'s*** all-new ***Hulk*** written by KELVIN GOSNELL with art by PAUL NEARY and JOHN RICHARDSON.

AVENGERS #204 — Plot by BOB BUDIANSKY. Script by DAVID MICHELINIE. Pencils by DON NEWTON or CARMINE INFANTINO. Inks by DAN GREEN. The return of the ***Yellow Claw!***

CAPTAIN AMERICA #254 — Written by ROGER STERN. Art by JOHN BYRNE and JOSEF RUBINSTEIN. In foggy London town, Cap is stalked by his WWII vampire foe — Baron Blood!

FANTASTIC FOUR #227 — Story by DOUG MOENCH. Art by BILL SIENKIEWICZ and PABLO MARCOS. Even when the FF take a vacation, they can't get away from danger! Suddenly — the Brain Parasites!

IRON MAN #143 — Written by DAVID MICHELINIE. Pencils by JOHN ROMITA JR. Cover by BOB LAYTON. In the far reaches of outer space, Iron Man battles the Sunturion aboard a five-mile long space station!

MARVEL PREMIERE #58 — Written by MILLS and WAGNER. Art by DAVE GIBBONS. Cover by FRANK MILLER and TERRY AUSTIN. Continuing the adventures of Britain's favorite time-traveler ***Dr. Who!***

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #72 — Written by RALPH MACCHIO and MARK GRUENWALD. Pencils by RON WILSON. Inks by GENE DAY. Aunt Petunia's rock-skinned nephew Benjy teams up with the ***Inhumans*** to tackle Maelstrom!

MASTER OF KUNG FU #97 — Written by DOUG MOENCH. Art by MIKE ZECK and GENE DAY. Is there any foe more fearsome than a man's own dark side? See Shang Chi confront *his* in the most bizarre MOKF adventure yet!

THOR #304 — Written by ROGER McKENZIE. Pencils by JOHN GARCIA. Inks by CHIC STONE. Cover by KEITH POLLARD. Thor battles Pagan, leader of a sinister cult which worships the Thunder God himself! Guest-starring ***Daredevil!***

MARVEL TALES #124 — Re-presenting Spider-Man #147, written by CONWAY with pencils by ANDRU and inks by ESPOSITO and HUNT. The double menace of the Tarantula and the Jackal!

MARVEL MAGAZINES

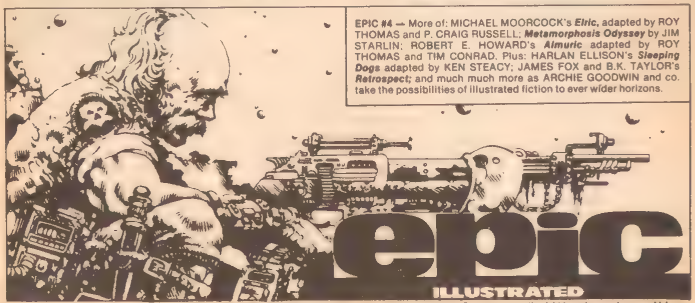
MARVEL PREVIEW #24 — Cover by PAUL GULACY. A special issue dedicated to fantastic females. First: an espionage thriller starring Marvel's own femme fatale, the ***Black Widow,*** written by RALPH MACCHIO with art by PAUL GULACY. Then there's ***Lady Daemon,*** written and drawn by MICHAEL GOLDEN, spotlighting twin sister sorcerers, their battle with each other, and its startling effect on the Hindenburg disaster. And rounding things out will be DENNY O'NEIL and MARSHALL ROGERS' ***Daughters of the Dragon*** featuring Colleen Wing and Misty Knight!

MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL #18 — Featuring Great Britain's gift to American TV humor — BENNY HILL! It's being created by a crew of Marvel super-stars under the mirthful eye of Crazy editor LARRY HAMA... so you know what to expect! (Or *do* you? Hmmmmm...)

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #60 — Written by MICHAEL FLEISHER. Pencils by JOHN BUSCEMA. King Khossus of Khoraja, jealous of Conan's popularity among his people, sends the Cimmerian on a mission he cannot survive!

CRAZY #70 — A best of Crazy super special featuring the funniest from the funniest plus another great bonus feature from the creators of the *Fuggets* and *Mail-opoly*. And — by the way — do you remember the fantastic illustration that accompanied last month's entry? Well, it was from the feature called "Frog's Legs" and was written by BOB TOOMEY with pencils by MILTON KNIGHT and inks by JOSE ALBELO. Except we forgot to mention it in the blurb. Boy, is our face red! Woob, woob, woob! Nyang, nyang, nyang! Hey Moe! Hey Moe! Hey Moe!

HOWARD THE DUCK #9 — Cover by JOHN POUND. Writing by BILL MANTLO and STEVE SKEATES. Art by GENE COLAN and DAVE SIMONS. This issue features four — count 'em — four tales of our hard-pressed duck. First the clawing menace of the Black Talon, then the brutal break-up of Howard and Bev; and, finally, melancholy-tinged solo tales of the duck and his erstwhile lady. And, don't think we've forgotten the slightly more upbeat antics of *S'reet Peeple* written by LYNN GRAEME with art by NED SONNTAG. 'Cause we *haven't!*



EPIC #4 — More of: MICHAEL MOORCOCK's ***Elric,*** adapted by ROY THOMAS and P. CRAIG RUSSELL; ***Metamorphosis Odyssey*** by JIM STARLIN; ROBERT E. HOWARD's ***Almuric*** adapted by ROY THOMAS and TIM CONRAD. Plus: HARLAN ELLISON's ***Sleeping Dogs*** adapted by KEN STEACY; JAMES FOX and B.K. TAYLOR's ***Retrospect;*** and much much more as ARCHIE GOODWIN and co. take the possibilities of illustrated fiction to ever wider horizons.

While we will never knowingly print inaccurate information in these pages, Marvel Comics reserves the right to make any changes which may become necessary. We're sorry for any inconvenience this may cause. —The Bullpen

rtising

An interview with

STEVE ENGLEHART

The following interview with Steve Englehart was conducted in July by Peter Sanderson. We'd like to thank Marshall Rogers for his hospitality during the interview.

FEATURE: To begin with, can you tell us why you are not doing the books you were announced to be doing for DC?

ENGLEHART: As you know, I got out of comics three years ago to write novels. I got finished with my first novel about six weeks ago. The way the novel business works is that you work on a project for a year, year and a half and then you sell the next project. There's a couple of months in between when you're negotiating. During that time I'm effectively unemployed. I was thinking that I would call up DC and try to get some work out of them to fill in the time. Right at that time Jack Harris called me up and said, "I've got this special project in mind and I'd really like you to do it. It's two books." One of the last things I did for DC two summers ago was a Madame Xanadu story for *Doorway to Nightmare*. I expected, as I always did working at DC, that it was going to go to John Calnan and Ernie Chua, or staff artists. But Jack Harris thought, "Why don't we get Marshall Rogers to do this one?" And he did. *Doorway to Nightmare* was canceled and this first story was going to go into *Unexpected* #200, the anniversary issue. Then they shrank *Unexpected* and so they had this story they'd been holding onto for two years and no place to put it. Jack came up with the idea that since DC is doing three-part mini-series these days, let's get Englehart and Rogers to do two more parts to this.

A real bizarre idea because the one part was complete in itself. But he called me and the timing was perfect after I'd spent fifteen months writing the novel. I said "I understand the top rate is $32 a page these days." In fact, I've since learned that it's really $31. At that point Jack cut me off and said, "Listen, it's a special project. We didn't know if we could get you anyway. Don't worry about it. I can get you more than $32 a page." I've learned since that right then and there I should have said, "Let's agree on a figure." But I'd always had good relations with Jack. I'd had good relations with DC for the year that I worked for them. Nobody gave me a hard time; I didn't give them a hard time. So I went ahead and wrote

> "The (comic) companies are just getting more and more malevolent."

these stories, came to New York to do my business with Dell, who is publishing my novel, and I figured I'd stop into DC, hand in my scripts, get my money, leave and it'd be painless. It turned out not to be so painless.

I should mention that after I did those two stories, there was a hang-up on the book going through the mill and I had another week that suddenly opened up. I called Julie Schwartz and got a *DC Comics Presents* from him. I chose Superman and the Creeper. I was trying to use up all the characters that I'd liked that I hadn't had the chance to get to work with. The Madame Xanadu two-parter stars Deadman and the Demon.

Anyway, I handed those three scripts in. Jack Harris told me this was the big news item this month, that Englehart and Rogers were going to do something again, and told me that they were going to do a lot of direct sales numbers and make a lot of extra money off this project. Then I went down the hall to talk to Paul Levitz and negotiate my rate. I had been figuring $32 . . .about $34 was what I was shooting for. Levitz offered me $31 and said, "Take it or leave it." I said, "Wait a minute. Jack Harris promised me more than $32, so we're talking at least $33." He said, "Jack Harris has no authority to do that." I said, "I don't care if he has the authority. He promised me this money." "Take it or leave it," he said. "$31." I was so thunderstruck. I couldn't believe they would do this. He wanted to talk to Jenette about this whole situation and it got to be 5'o'clock and no decision was reached, so I went away.

The more I thought about it, I thought, "This is not only ridiculous, but why should I have to put up with it? I don't need this in the first place. I was doing them a favor. It's supposed to be making them a lot of money. This is just work-for-hire comic book stuff. Why should I take this?" So I went back in a couple of days later. I'd been totally on the run since I arrived in New York and I didn't have time to get back and I wasn't that big a deal. I went in and said, "What is it, Paul?"

"We've decided $31."

I said, "No." I went down the hall and found Jenette in Jack Harris's office. I said, "Jenette, we have a problem."

She said, "No, I've heard the story and I agree with my editorial staff."

I said, "Fine, then I'm taking my scripts back."

Jack Harris leapt up, "Wait, wait, wait, wait! Sit down! Sit down, Steve. Let's talk about this." So I sat in Jack's office for about half an hour and he went up the hall with Paul and Jenette, and came back bubbling: "It's okay. Look, I can't really remember what I said to you, but we'll compromise. We'll give you $32."

I said, "No. Give me the scripts."* I took the scripts and now I have a new purchaser for them, as I figured I would. We'll be doing them for the new Eclipse magazine that is coming out. We haven't discussed exactly how this will work out, but these stories — the two Madame Xanadu-Deadman-Demon 25 page stories — will be suitably altered and appear in the Eclipse magazine. I'd really like to say — an unsolicited testimonial — that everything I hear about the project, everything I've heard since I've come to town, and everything I've heard today is exactly the way the business ought to be run. For years now, people have been saying, "Somebody should run a business like this." And finally somebody is.

The companies are just getting more and more malevolent. When you really look at what management has done and is doing every day of business operation, it's always designed to screw the freelancer. The whole concept of "Let's try to do a good book" has long since been jettisoned. The whole concept of "Let's spend a couple of extra bucks in order to make it come out just right" has long since been jettisoned. It's really down to the point of what it came down to with Levitz and me: "Take it or leave it." They know that most people working in comics have to take it. They don't have any other alternative. They can't take the time off and quit for six months and work up something else, or find a different job. To work for the comic book companies today is basically "eat shit."

I understand that I'm in kind of a unique position in that I'm feisty enough not to want to eat any shit at all [laughter] and at a point where I'm doing something else. My novel is done, it's sold, and I'm prepared to start a second one. I've got a whole other thing so it puts me in a position where I can say to them, "I'm taking the scripts back. I'm not going to accept this because it's not what I was promised." I wish more people could do that. I wish there were all these things that would give people the incentive to say, "You promised me this. You're going to live up to it." And there isn't, except with the Eclipse publications. I really think that this is exactly the right time to start this because again — this is an incredibly long answer to your question [laughter] — while I was writing the novel, the last fifteen to eighteen months, I haven't really looked at comic books. I would go into the comic book stores near where I lived every once in a while and ask my friends, "What's coming out that's worth reading?" They'd say "*The X-Men, Daredevil*," and that would be it. Nothing else from Marvel. Occasional jobs like something Howie Chaykin did, but nothing else regularly. One guy said to me, "Marvel Comics is all a blur these days. They all sort of fade into each other. You can't tell them apart."

It's really too bad because it wasn't like that as short a time as five years ago. It was totally different.

FEATURE: Have you seen any of the recent comics yourself?

ENGLEHART: Since I came to New York, I have. Most everybody I know here I know from comics. I have a lot of friends who are still doing them. So when I come to town, I start asking them what's good and they say, *X-Men, Daredevil* and then there's a long silence. I've been back in the comic book world for about a week and a half now and I've seen a lot of stuff. It's nowhere near as exciting as it used to be. The quality of the printing is lousy with these plastic plates: it's all murky, it's dark and hard to read. What it comes back down to is there's no energy in them. It's like you can tell if the Force is with you or not. If the energy is there . . .we were mentioning earlier [before the interview began] . . .you go back to DC in the '50s and talk about *Jimmy Olsen* and *Lois Lane*. The people who were doing them believed that they were doing something worthwhile. And it's good comics, for the time period. For what it is, it's solid. Marvel Comics from 1962 to 1976: pretty much continuously solid. Those people believed in what they were doing and it showed. But from now on, everybody is putting in his time because people became aware of the fact that they're getting screwed, and because they have no alternative, they're getting screwed worse. The companies, like sharks, are just as happy to screw them even worse, but everybody is feeling worse about it because they understand for the first time in a long time that they're not getting treated like everybody else in any other creative medium.

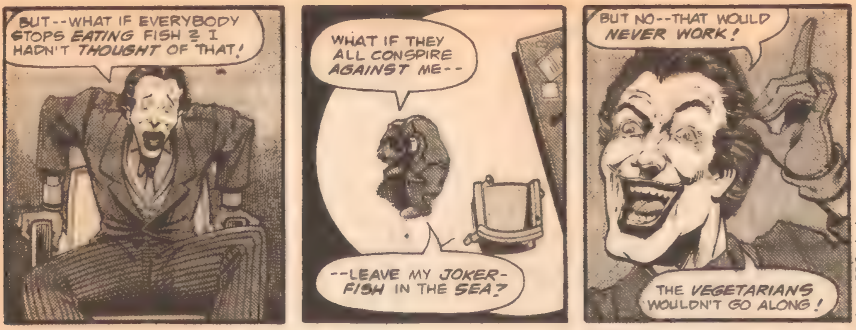
FEATURE: Do you think that's the entire reason comics are this way today, or could it be perhaps that's there's too much recycling of old ideas instead of creating new ones?

ENGLEHART: Well, that's part of it. Nobody in his right mind is going to create anything new since he doesn't own it. Why should they invent somebody new who will make Marvel Comics or DC Comics rich? And they won't see another dime. They get paid the same whether they bring back Dr. Doom for the seventeenth time or whether they create Dr. Infinity, or somebody new.

FEATURE: In your series at Marvel and DC, however, you did a lot of new things with the established characters. There doesn't

---

* Levitz comments that he feels that this entire dispute was based on a "misunderstanding" and that "we do not feel we promised" Englehart the amount of money he feels he was promised. Levitz says that Englehart has a perfect right to withdraw the stories if he feels he cannot accept the terms he was offered and that DC's system for payment is a "fair" one. Furthermore, Levitz states that Englehart is "very talented" and that "we regret not having the stories." —P.S.


BUT--WHAT IF EVERYBODY STOPS EATING FISH & I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT!
WHAT IF THEY ALL CONSPIRE AGAINST ME--
--LEAVE MY JOKER-FISH IN THE SEA?
BUT NO--THAT WOULD NEVER WORK!
THE VEGETARIANS WOULDN'T GO ALONG!
© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

seem to be all that much of that going on in many of the books today.

ENGLEHART: In the stuff that I've read since I've come to town, which is certainly not everything that's come out, it seems to me that I've seen it all before. It's like when I got to town, I hadn't seen *The Empire Strikes Back*. Anybody who's into comics has seen it all before, but they've never seen it like this. Lucas took it and put the energy into it. There're no surprises, but you love it because it's good. I find no surprises in comic books, and you don't love it because there's no energy there.

I came in with a whole group of people in the early 1970s: Gerber, Brunner, McGregor, Wrightson, Weiss, Jeff Jones, Howie Chaykin . . . there was a whole crew of people who had grown up and come of age in the early 1970s who decided "We believe. Stan Lee said this is going to be an artform someday. We want to get on it." We all went into Marvel Comics because we thought Marvel Comics would grow as far as we would grow. We would continue to go somewhere and Marvel Comics had no end to it. We would be the third generation to carry it to even higher plateaus. And then in 1973 or 1974, the corporations bought them out. In about 1975 the pressure really started to be felt, and by 1976 a lot of us had said, "Forget this." Now it's 1980 and it seems to me that most people today — I have to make generalizations and I want to emphasize again that I'm not really on top of it, so I'm sure there are exceptions; anybody who reads this interview and doesn't think it applies, then, fine — but people today have said, "I want to do Marvel Comics," or "I want to DC Comics." Therefore they have a whole conception of what the comics have been and they want to do more of that. Whereas when we came in, we said we want to find new things to do that will redefine Marvel Comics as we go. It's just a different head space. Nobody wants to, and from what I hear, nobody can — is allowed to — do any flights of fancy any more.

For an example, when I had been in the business for about a year, one night I said, "I always liked to read the specials in the summer and they weren't doing any specials, but this would be neat: we'll do an entire summer building a story between the Avengers and the Defenders in both their books." I proposed it to them, and they said, "Well, we don't think that's really going to sell. But, what the hell, give it a shot." Then I did it, and it did sell and they said, "Great." In one sense it established my reputation at that point. They said, "Hmm, this guy's ideas seem to be all right, and he handled it well," and so on. So later when I wanted to do other weird things, they were willing to go for them.

But you couldn't do that today. And there's no better reason why not now than there was eight years ago. But now they would just say, "No, too weird." There's this story about Jim Shooter, that he did an epic in *The Avengers* and it didn't work out too well. I haven't read it so I don't know why, but people say it didn't work. So Jim Shooter called a staff meeting and said in so many words, "I tried an epic and it didn't work. Therefore, none of us will ever do epics again because if I couldn't do it, you can't do it."* It's that sort of mentality which is chipping away at the established companies. And it's too damn bad because I can remember from the *old* days, as we say [laughter] — in the early 1970s — it was totally different. When I went to work for Marvel, it was a bullpen. When I went on staff there was me, Herb Trimpe, John Romita, Marie Severin, Morrie Kuromoto, John Verpoorten, Holly Resnikof, Roy and Stan. We were Marvel Comics and we were all sitting there having a great time. We were all friends, we were all working closely together, we'd yell at each other across the partitions. Nowadays, there's thirty-seven editors.

I mentioned to Jo Duffy the other day about how we used to work: they would say, "Okay, you will take over this series. Here, *Captain America* is yours. We expect you to do a good job on it. If you don't, we'll replace you. Otherwise we'll leave you alone." I would come up with a plot, send it to the artist, the artist would draw it, he would send it to me, I would write it, send it to the letterer, then he would send it to the inker and he would send it to the office, where they would see it for the first time. There would be a few minor corrections because everybody did his job. And the book would go out.

Jo Duffy's jaw fell. She not only never heard this, but she couldn't believe it because now, each one of those steps has to go through an editor on the way. And what it's bred is a limitation. If you're living with a lot of limitations in addition to what I said before about not owning the material . . .if you're living in a world that's heavily regimented, you're not likely to come up with a real bizarre idea because you're not thinking in those terms in your day-to-day reality. And second, it breeds laziness. People figure somebody else will catch a mistake: that's his job. The writer doesn't really have to think this through. If the editor doesn't like it, he or she will think it through. And the artist, I'm sure, thinks "If I screw up here, they've got people in the office who can take care of it." It's a totally different system. It still says Marvel Comics on the door but it ain't the Marvel Comics a lot of us used to work for and believe in.

FEATURE: You said there you felt Marvel Comics would grow with you. I suspect a lot of people at Marvel and DC would say, "No, Marvel and DC are always going to appeal mostly to younger people," and that it's unrealistic to think that we can keep them while appealing to the older readers as well.

ENGLEHART: Well, they may say that, but the point is that the concept did not exist when I came in. The idea was — at Marvel,

* As we reported in *Comics Feature* 2, Shooter says that he does not rule out multi-part stories or epics, although he prefers stories that are complete in one issue. He states that a story must be particularly good to warrant continuing into another issue, and that in an epic, each issue should have a complete story in itself, but with a subplot that continues into the next issue. —P.S.

that's where my major experience was; my experience at DC has been limited and late in the overall scheme of things — Marvel was supposed to be the place where you got something new every month. There are two ways to be really successful: one is to give the people exactly what they want, and the other is to give them something they've never seen before. Either one of those will work if you do it right. Marvel operated on the second prèmise from 1962 up until 1976: basically, that a Marvel comic meant that it was new and different. They didn't have any trouble selling those books. Sales are much worse now than they were then. Since they've clamped down, sales have really fallen off. In the early 1970s, you had to sell forty-something percent in order to make your money back. And all the books were doing that. There were all these titles and they were selling high forties, low fifties. The break-even is now in the low thirties, I think, but a lot of books are selling in the twenties. That means that approximately one book out of every four is being bought and the rest are being sent back.

It's a children's medium, yes. But there was always room to do . . . *Dr. Strange*. *Dr. Strange* was not designed to be a children's book. It sold fine. The original *Master of Kung Fu* — although what Moench and Gulacy, and Moench and Zeck have done and are doing is a different character than what I created but I have nothing bad to say about it — the original *Master of Kung Fu* was a more esoteric concept. Nobody said, "This has to appeal to five-year-olds." Five-year-olds will read the more traditional super-heroes. There are plenty of people out there to support these other books. Today it's totally different. Today they've got this idea that it has to be limited, and the result is that the books are worse and the sales are worse. There's no logical reason why they're doing this, except that they can balance their books much easier if everything falls into place without having to worry about somebody coming up with something new next month.

FEATURE: I remember that when you left Marvel to go to DC you were quoted as saying that you thought that DC would be what Marvel used to be.

ENGLEHART: No, I don't think I said that. I was real careful because I'd been burned. I had really believed what Marvel had said for fourteen years. I'm naive, what can I say? I really thought that we were all one big happy family at Marvel: if you were loyal to them, they would be loyal to you. Turning out good books that made them a lot of money was just what they wanted you to do. I was disillusioned when I left there. I was on the phone with Gerry Conway that day and said, "I quit." It took me days to really believe I quit Marvel Comics. And yet I was clear: I wasn't going to eat shit. I was at the point where I didn't have to do it. I paid my dues; I earned my spurs. I didn't have to do it and I wasn't going to do it. I went to DC and they were talking a real good game. They

"When I went to see *Star Wars* . . .the ultimate potential of comics was up there on the screen. It was never achieved at Marvel comics."

had just gotten Jenette and were talking about how they were going to turn it around, how they were going to do a lot of new stuff. They treated me right. But I very carefully did not ever say, "DC is now the hope of the future," because I didn't know if they were going to be. I had gotten real leery of buying anybody's prospectus at that point. So I was happy to say nice things about DC. I was happy to say nasty things about Marvel. But I never said DC was going to be the wave of the future. It would depend on whether or not they followed through with what they were talking about. And I don't think they really ever did. They never really got a big, solid stable of good writers and good artists and let them loose. They had the chance at that point because a lot of people were quitting Marvel, or getting disillusioned. If DC had picked up the ball and really said, "Let's be fair about this," they could have done it. Instead they said, "We'll take anything we can get. We'll run the company on a businesslike basis." Over the last four years people have moved as they ran out of patience with Marvel, but I haven't really seen anything yet to indicate that that's changed DC a whole lot. Some of the people who are there are good people, but I haven't seen that burst of energy that we've talked about.

FEATURE: When you left Marvel, you said it was because of Gerry Conway grabbing *The Avengers* for himself. The official Marvel explanation was that Englehart kept missing deadlines. How would you answer that?

ENGLEHART: I would answer it quickly by saying that it's not true. If you look at what Jim Shooter did in the couple of years after I left, there were a lot more fill-in issues than there ever were in mine. Everybody had trouble with deadlines, but I never made a book go reprint until *Avengers* #150. I was halfway through that issue when Conway called me up and I quit. What I did, actually, was sit down and write the last eight pages in five minutes, with the most outrageous dialogue. I just said, "I'm going to get this out of here," and wrote just silly shit. It wasn't a real *Avengers* comic book, it was just dialogue for the sake of dialogue. I remember Yellowjacket said to the Wasp, "Marry me and we'll raise little Avengeritos." Then I realized that that was no good because they'd just rewrite it. Better I should make them go reprint for the 150th issue. I'm not shy about taking my revenge when I get screwed, but I don't carry it around with me for months afterwards. In the heat of the moment I said, "We'll make them go reprint and to hell with them." And then, of course, we got the first of the famous Jim Shooter things, which I've synthesized down to: "_____ is really a major talent and he's wonderful to work with and we wish him a lot of luck in his new career and if the syphilis hadn't reached his brain, I'm sure we'd still be working with him." At the time I went away from that and said, "This company is screwed." There have been a series of people who've left Marvel who've they've said the same things about: Don McGregor, Len Wein, Marv Wolfman, Steve Gerber, etc. It's a little easier to see who was telling the truth now that you've seen it fifteen times since then. I read Roy's interview in *The Journal* and I can understand everything he was saying. I'm sure they treated him exactly the way he said it. But I did have to laugh when he talked about how everybody gets so vindictive about people after he leaves Marvel because you may remember that the guy who wrote letters to *The Journal* denouncing Steve Englehart for having said nasty things about Marvel is the guy who's now complaing about how vindictive people get when they leave Marvel. It's now standard operating procedure that whenever anybody leaves, they say, "He never sold anyway and he was late all the time and caused us a lot of problems." Maybe, but not if you hear that over and over again about everybody who leaves the company. I felt I had to prove myself when I went to DC because of this. I was so far ahead at DC that I got a bonus at the end of the year for having met my quota

and having gotten my stuff in without any problems. What it comes down to is that what Marvel said wasn't true. To my mind, they never got as intense about it with anybody else, although, writing a story in which Harold H. Harold leaps out a window when he can't write the Dracula book any more is pretty bitchy. Remember those editorials that ran in *The Avengers* saying that "Steve was great, but of course he beat his wife and eats dog meat. But we wish him a lot of luck."

FEATURE: What happened to the *Batman* book that it was rumored you and Marshall were going to do for Star*Reach?

ENGLEHART: Amazingly enough, Mike Friedrich, who was putting it together, came to terms with DC. When it was proposed, we were really up for it. We spent a lot of last summer, as we did the convention circuit in California, discussing it and working it out. But we figured DC was never going to go for it. Then they did, but Mike had been having trouble financially with Star*Reach and wanted to do it with the minimum amount of money possible — the same sort of mind-set that the companies have. I was starting a new career and Marshall was getting interested in a lot of different things, including *Detectives, Inc.* We were looking forward to something that would advance our respective careers. What we had envisioned was a format at least in hailing distance of the Frazetta books that Ballantine put out. Maybe not in color, but something that would be in book stores. Now they're making a *Batman* movie, and my idea was that this would be the equivalent of a *Batman* movie. What I had in mind was something that somebody could spend a couple of bucks for, and then sit down for an evening and really get into a solid *Batman* story, and flow with it. But the package that was being presented was minimal all the way around, and was only going to be sold in comic book specialty stores. It would have only reached the audience that already knew us; it would not have reached anybody else. Certainly it would have sold to an audience that knew us but we were interested in getting out to a larger world. So the final deal was not anything that made it worth our while.

Again, my major thrust these days is novels. Novels are long projects which take between a year and two years to really write. There are breaks in there during which I'd like to do comics, but at this point if I'm going to do comics, I want to do something that's worthwhile, and there's no sense in my coming back to just do *Kamandi* or *Human Fly* or even *The Fantastic Four* (not that it's been offered). There's no sense in coming back and doing comics per se for the companies as a regular thing. If I'm going to do them, I want to make sure I've got a good artist, that the whole package is going to look right, and that it's going to be something that I don't have to apologize for being involved with. I don't want to go back and relive previous years of my life. And so regretfully we turned it down.

DC said an interesting thing about that: they were willing to let us have total editorial control over it so long as we didn't print very many of them and only sold them in specialty stores. If we wanted to put it out more widely, then they wanted to get back editorial control. It's Catch-22.

FEATURE: Do you think there would have been certain stipulations imposed that would have subverted the story somehow?

ENGLEHART: I don't know. I would tend to think so. My experience, even then, was that editors like to edit, and I was brought up in the tradition that it was my responsibility to get it right. When I was working as an editor at Marvel, my responsibility was to read it over — there'd always be a couple of things: misspelled words, but never anything grossly wrong — and when I went from editorial to being freelance for Marvel, it was my experience that generally the people who edited my stuff liked to edit *in* grammatical errors. The stuff usually came out worse after going through editors. I was and am real sensitive about anybody who's not as on top of what I'm doing, trying to work on what I'm doing.

Even without the trip that's gone down this week with Jack Harris and Paul Levitz, I would have expected DC probably to worsen the product if they had had a hand in it. I didn't want to do that, and the alternative was to make it such a small print run that nobody would see it anyway.

FEATURE: What can you tell us about your new novel?

ENGLEHART: The novel is coming out from Dell. It was sold 18 months ago. I spent the summer here two years ago setting the whole thing up, getting an agent and then getting a publisher. Both Dell and Avon wanted it. Dell made the better offer. I'm really happy with the way I'm being treated at Dell. Again, dealing with any other publisher is like reaching nirvana. These people are in business. It's been my experience that they don't lie to you, and I've asked other authors if there are any hidden pitfalls, and they said, "No, not really. They figure you have talent, they want to make money off it." It's real simple: they'll give you a fair deal, you give them a fair book.

At the moment it will come out as a paperback next summer. But there are a couple of alternatives: different formats which are now being negotiated.

The novel is called *The Point Man*. It's gone through about fourteen titles. Again, this was a learning experience for me. I've never done this before. In some ways, I'm sure I will always be naive. I figured the book would run about three hundred and fifty pages. Well, I'm used to writing seventeen pages in three days. Therefore it will take me two months [laughter]. When I told this to my agent he said, "Why don't you ask for a year?" And in fact, it took me fifteen months because a lot of this I had to learn.

I was sensitive about comics when I went around to sell myself. I thought, "I'm the top comic book writer around in a lot of people's estimation. That should give me a real entry." No. Not only was it no credit, having written comic books was a negative credit. The worst example was an editor at Jove Books, who called my agent and said, "Would you send this guy to see me?" I thought, "Oh boy, the editor wants to talk to me. This has got to be good." I'd written the first seventy pages and outlined the rest of it. I went in and it was lying on her desk. She asked, "Why did you send me this?" I said, "Well, because I want to sell it to you." She said, "But you're a comic book writer." And I said, "Yeah . . .but I didn't write traditional comic books." She said, "I know comic book writers. They can't write. They need pictures in order to get their stories across. And it's all very shallow nonsense." I said, "Did you read my manuscript?" "No," she said, "I don't have to read your manuscript." I said, "Why don't you read it?" She said, "Because you're a comic book writer. Tell your agent not to bother me with this stuff again."

> "In novels, you're not trapped in stereotypes."

Eventually, people who did read the manuscript did like what they saw and we went on from there. Because it was a learning experience and because I had to readjust to a lot of things, it took me longer than I thought. And as I said, I went through about 14 titles. It started off being *Best of Both Worlds*, then it became *Edge, Thin Edge, Max, The Max* and a couple more I can't remember. As I worked through it, even though I knew the story, it wasn't until it was down on paper that I could really get images off it. When I got to *The Point Man*, that summed it up for me, and I've had that title for about six months.

It was so much fun really to kick out and not have to worry about "Can I say this on this page or is it going to need too many panels? Can I get all this into seventeen pages? Will the Comics Code object to this?" With a book, it's me and my editor. That's really all it comes down to. Editors in books are intelligent people who know what they're doing, who are dealing with the real world. I would still prefer that nobody touch my stuff because having been a writer and an editor, I try to get it right the first time. I was talking to my editor yesterday and he said it was fine with him. He doesn't have any compulsion to edit. He's got seventy-five pages to go and hasn't found anything that's needed gross rewriting.

The book itself is difficult to describe. In comics you can say, "The story is this." In novels, because you're dealing on so many different levels, it's a lot of different things. It's ostensibly a spy thriller, in one sense. The starting point for it is that in 1957 the

American military wanted to see if they could contact their submarines at sea through telepathy because radio won't go through water. This was in the middle of the Cold War. They tried it and it worked to an extent, but not enough that the American military could really see it as a viable continuing alternative. So they gave it up. But the French got word of this and published it, and immediately the Russians looked up and said, "We've been doing it for twenty-five years." That was a joke in the '50s: the Russians were always claiming to have invented something years before. Whether or not they had been doing it, they thought they could get something out of it. So in 1957 they established a military office of biological studies, which was primarily interested in telekenesis, E.S.P., reading with your fingertips, any sort of bizarre phenomena which they thought they might be able to make use of. And they've been hot and heavy at it ever since. According to the few books coming out about it now, the Russians seem to have made a lot of progress in terms of redefining E.S.P. Not everybody can do it but they've found people who can and who are reliable. I took that one step further. My hero, Max August, is a disc jockey in San Francisco living a totally normal life. Somebody steals something out of his home. At first he thinks it's just burglars. Then he finds out that it's Russian spies. Then he finds out it's Russian spies who've got telekinetic powers. Then he finds out that they can do more than that. But it's not *Dr. Strange*. It comes out of my involvement in magic, but it's not guys shooting rays out of their palms. It's all based on what actually can be done. Perhaps not on the scale on which I've used it in the book, but it's all based on what it is and how it's done. So in another sense, it's like a Castaneda book. It's an initiation.

Also, in novels you're not trapped in stereotypes. It's only when you get out of comics that you realize, even if you think you've been doing stuff that is new and different, there's still buzz words. Because it's a Marvel comic, a character thinks like this or talks like this. When you suddenly get to create somebody totally your own and basically realistic, you can really kick out again, and not be trapped in stereotypes.

The book *is* realistic. It includes what some people might call fantasy, but it's always brought back to a realistic level. So Max August, in the beginning of the book, has no predilection towards magic. He is not destined to become Star-Lord some day. He's just a guy. It's my best shot at writing somebody who's just like you and me, except things start to get weird around him. He was a point man in Viet Nam and he's used to thinking on his feet.

FEATURE: What's a "point man?"

ENGLEHART: The point man was the guy who, when they were moving troops through Viet Nam, was chosen on a rotating basis to go out a half mile ahead of everybody. He was the scout. He was the point man.

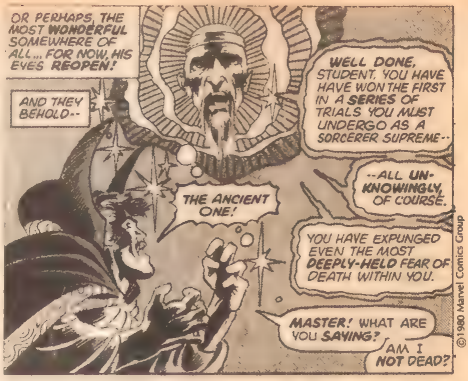
ROGERS: He's also called the sucker! [Laughter]

ENGLEHART: There's a lot about Viet Nam in the book, and about what it meant to America and what America can do about it. That's a whole other aspect of the book: "Yeah, it's wrong. We screwed up, but it was six years ago." We can't sweep it under the rug, but it's time to get on with it. Life continues.

August was a point man in Viet Nam, and now he's a disc jockey and he's the point man on the radio station. He's the one the whole radio station is built around. He's used to thinking on his feet, so that when he gets caught up with spies, he doesn't just go to the cops and say, "Please protect me." He's used to taking care of himself.

FEATURE: You suggest that he develops psychic powers.

ENGLEHART: He does develop them, but in exactly the same way that anybody can develop them. That's the point again: this guy is not special; he's no different from you and me. He's a totally normal, 1980s person who if you tried to explain magic to him, his eyes would glaze over. But because he's caught up in it, he is shown through other characters in this book what's possible and how to do it. By the end of the book he's been initiated, but again, he's not going to the Himalayas to meet the Ancient One and coming back two panels later being able to shoot rays out of his palms.


OR PERHAPS, THE MOST WONDERFUL SOMEWHERE OF ALL... FOR NOW, HIS EYES REOPEN!
AND THEY BEHOLD--
WELL DONE, STUDENT. YOU HAVE HAVE WON THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF TRIALS YOU MUST UNDERGO AS A SORCERER SUPREME--
--ALL UN-KNOWINGLY, OF COURSE.
THE ANCIENT ONE!
YOU HAVE EXPUNGED EVEN THE MOST DEEPLY-HELD FEAR OF DEATH WITHIN YOU.
MASTER! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? AM I NOT DEAD?
© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

FEATURE: You're proposing this as a latent power that everybody has?

ENGLEHART: Yeah, certainly to different extents. And people don't have the power to shoot rays out of their palms: that's the bad example. But what he can do in terms of controlling his mind, the power that's in his mind, the proven abilities that are there and the means to go about developing them, that's all true. And that's what he goes through.

FEATURE: It's seems that, speaking of comparing August to Dr. Strange and Star-Lord, most of the central characters that you've done in comics follow this path: they start out as unaware of something and then gain awareness. Or, they start out amoral or morally degenerate and they rise towards heroism. Or symbolically start out at one level of power, perhaps as a normal human, and they gain powers as they go along, accompanied by this rise to heroism. It's what Shang-Chi's name means: "the rising and advancing of a spirit." Are you aware of this theme?

ENGLEHART: Yeah, I am. I'm just basically optimistic. Naive, but optimistic. That's been my experience in life: I usually start out looking for the best in a situation. Eventually I'm put to the test one way or another, and I try to rise above it and go on from there. Everybody writes from his life experience. The better writers can bury that more, or have a more varied life from which to draw. And I do believe that things will get better . . .if you work at them. I think it's up to people. I don't think it's just going to happen. Times are getting tougher right now and that's only a signal for people to get their shit together. The times will continue and the people will continue. I don't really expect the human race to be wiped out. I think the human race has a purpose for being.

FEATURE: You seem to be dealing more in personal spiritual odysseys. For example, Kang, and before him, Dr. Doom, eventually becomes Immortus. Or, Mantis starts out as a prostitute and becomes the Celestial Madonna. Or, Mr. Miracle decides to set himself up as a Christ figure to redeem Apokolips.

ENGLEHART: I've always been primarily interested in people, and my attitude towards how people should live their lives, or what they do with their lives, is that they progress upward. When I was doing comics, I think I was the only writer who first figured out what my characters were going to move on to and then think of a villain for them to fight. In every other case I can think of, and over the years I've asked this question of other writers, the writer sat down and thought of what menace the character could fight and then figured how to fit in some personality development. It's just a different

approach. I'm interested in people. I want to see people move on. It's no good for me if Aunt May stays on the edge of death all these years. If somebody in the old days said to me, "Okay, you write *Spider-Man*," I would have moved from there. I don't know exactly what I would have done, but I don't like to take something and just stay at that point. It implies progress.

FEATURE: Spiritual progress rather than just setting Spider-Man up with a new girlfriend?

ENGLEHART: Right. When I got a series, I always sat down and immersed myself in what had gone before. The *Justice League* is probably the best example because nothing had happened in the *Justice League* in fifteen years. The only thing that had been set up was that Hawkman and Green Arrow didn't like each other. When I took over that book I went back to each of the individual characters' series and looked for the stuff that I thought was the best. I went back to the Broome and Infantino *Flash*, the Adams and O'Neil *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*, the early 1940s Bob Kane/Bill Finger *Batman* . . . I sat down and said, "First of all, who are these guys? Second of all, who should they be?" And then, I started moving them. It's like rolling a rock. In the first one I got Flash and Wonder Woman pissed off at each other. The next month I did something else with that, and pretty soon I had everything rolling and everyone was moving along. That's probably the most typical example since I was starting from absolutely nothing as far as I was concerned. In most cases at Marvel, there were lots of nice bits that people had done along the way and I would take them and continue them. I would try to do something new but there was at least momentum, whereas with the Justice League there wasn't.

KATAR, PERHAPS YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE MENTIONED MY MEMBERSHIP!
I, TOO, FEEL THE JUSTICE LEAGUE'S RULE TO BE UNFAIR, BUT I HAVE NO WISH TO DIVIDE THEM OVER IT.
NONSENSE, MY DARLING! YOU ARE TOO GENEROUS WITH THESE PEOPLE!
TRADITIONS GROW THROUGH INERTIA--NOT PROGRESS! THE TRADITION AGAINST DUPLICATING POWERS EXISTS BECAUSE NO ONE HAS EVER CHALLENGED IT!
WE ARE ALIENS HERE, SHAYERA! IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, DESPITE MY JLA FRIENDSHIPS, YOU ARE MY ONE TRUE COMPANION IN LIFE--AS I AM YOURS!
I SHALL CHALLENGE ANYTHING THAT SERVES TO COME BETWEEN US!
17
© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

FEATURE: In terms of personal development, the thing that struck me right away about your *Justice Leagues* was that it wasn't just a team of people who work together and don't really know each other: they were a group of friends. They call each other by their first names. Or with Hawkman and Hawkgirl, they are two people who are in love. It seems as though one of the things you tend to do when you take over a series is to dwell on themes of friendship and love. Do you feel there's not enough of that in comics?

ENGLEHART: I never really thought of it in those terms. Again, it's the way I approach it. I like friendship and I like love and it seemed to me that if people were going to hang around together all the time, they wouldn't be calling each other Batman and Superman; they'd call each other Bruce and Clark, or whatever it would be. The way I approach it is, what would it really be like? Not a slick, surface comic book way that's always been done. If you were Shang-Chi and you suddenly found out that your father was running the most evil empire, that's not just a bit so you can have somebody to fight. What does it mean to you? What would you do? And in the Justice League, in the DC reality these are all these major superheroes. They must have some sort of feeling that they're different from other people. They each have their own individual outlooks on what it's like. And as soon as you start thinking along those lines, you come up with romantic and friendship subplots which then suggest situations. And then I find a villain who can accomplish what I need to accomplish in that situation.

You mentioned Mantis before. I introduced Mantis specifically as a slut. She was supposed to be a hooker who came in to make the moves on every male Avenger, sowing discord and jealousy. It's all interpersonal relationships. Then when I got her in there, I found that I couldn't get her to do that. Stan used to say the books write themselves, the characters write themselves. It was absolutely true. Every time I tried to make her nasty, it didn't sound right to me, so I would do something else. Pretty soon her whole life was rolling off in a different direction. The Celestial Madonna marrying the tree routine grew during the course of the couple of years she was in the book. I had no idea at the beginning it would happen.

FEATURE: Did you have plans to bring her back eventually?

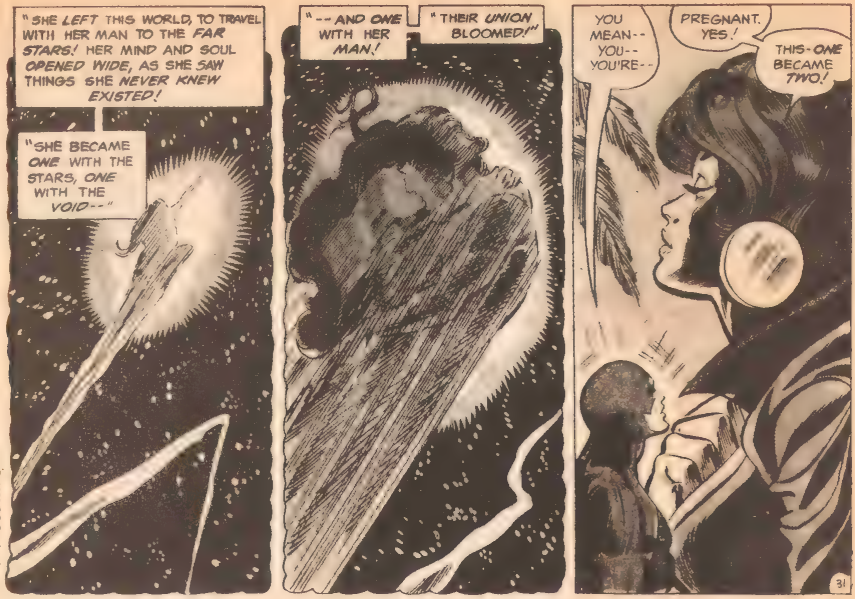
ENGLEHART: No, I did not.

FEATURE: Or her son or daughter?

ENGLEHART: It's interesting. I wrote her out. I wanted to come to a conclusion. As the books went along organically, that's where it needed to go. I sent her off into the cosmos and that was it. Then I quit Marvel and went to DC and right after that I went to the San Diego convention and people asked, "What's going to happen to her? Are we ever going to see her again?" I thought it would be fun to bring her back in the DC universe. Up until that point I hadn't planned it. So I did the *Justice League* story with Willow where she comes back, and says, "I can't tell you who I am and I can't talk about it because I'll get sued." It was just a fun thing to say that yeah, she came out of it all right. After I did that story, I said that was the end of it.

If you're working for a company, it seems to me that you ought to work within their framework, if you're going to work for them at all. As a reader I didn't like . . . Kirby's Fourth World comes to mind. There's a lot I like about Kirby, so it's not a general thing, and the Fourth World was nice but the fact that it never related, or only dimly related through a very altered Jimmy Olsen/Superman thing, to the rest of the DC universe was a problem. I can think of other examples, but I want to be diplomatic. There are people who create their own set of characters and try to live within that for the rest of their comic book existence. That seems limited and egocentric. Therefore, I didn't want to create a lot of Englehart characters who would follow me around. This was just a trip with Willow.

However, three years later when Jack Harris asked me to write a Madame Xanadu story, there was a place in which Willow could play a part. So in the story we check in with Willow for a couple of


"SHE LEFT THIS WORLD, TO TRAVEL WITH HER MAN TO THE FAR STARS! HER MIND AND SOUL OPENED WIDE, AS SHE SAW THINGS SHE NEVER KNEW EXISTED!
"SHE BECAME ONE WITH THE STARS, ONE WITH THE VOID--"
"--AND ONE WITH HER MAN!
"THEIR UNION BLOOMED!"
YOU MEAN--YOU--YOU'RE--
PREGNANT. YES!
THIS-ONE BECAME TWO!
31

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

pages. She's had her son and is still living on the island. We don't see the son. This time around I thought that if it was still interesting to people and I'm still interested in it and I'm still writing a comic book three years from now, maybe we'll check in with her again.

FEATURE: Does this mean that Mantis/Willow is now undergoing another change of name and appearance?

ENGLEHART: I guess so. She'll appear under a third name in the Eclipse magazine. I like that. It appeals to my sense of humor that this character does follow me around. But again, if people ever said, "We don't want to see this lady any more," that's okay with me.

FEATURE: Does it disturb you that DC owns Willow and Marvel owns Mantis and that they may do their own stories with her some day?

ENGLEHART: There's nothing I can do about that. My attitude has always been that if somebody is going to do something good, then I'm all for it. I'm not all caught up in that. I understand the ground rules that come with working for the companies. If an artist takes my script and can add something to it, that's perfectly all right with me. I don't think, "I wrote this. How dare you change my script?" If it can be improved, great. If the artist takes it and screws it up, I'll get real pissed off.

If somebody at DC wanted to take Willow or Silver St. Cloud and bring them back and do something decent with them, that's okay. I understand the way it works. If they bring back any of these characters and just do bullshit things with them, it'll be too bad. It's not going to get me pissed off at this point; it's far behind me now. But I'd really hope that Willow will stay on her island in the DC universe, and that Silver St. Cloud will stay out of the Batman's life until and unless I ever have the chance to use them myself again. Since I created them, I think I understand them better than anybody else. But if somebody else can do something nice with them, that's okay by me.

FEATURE: Speaking of the Celestial Madonna, it seems as though you have a great interest in working along mythological themes.

ENGLEHART: When I was writing *The Defenders*, which I had before I was doing *Dr. Strange*, I wrote Dr. Strange as a guy who shoots rays out of his palms. When I took over *Dr. Strange*, and had to start getting more deeply into him than I could when he was just one out of four or five characters in a superhero team book, I said to myself that if I was going to write a credible sorcerer, I should study a little sorcery. And I found that I was personally interested in it and I went on into astrology, tarot, ceremonial magic, mythology. Since it was part of me and I enjoy it still, I started using more mythological themes. I also did the first real integration of Thor and Norse mythology in a story that was going to be a black-and-white and came out as the annual, the stuff that Roy picked up on later. I thought that there was an entire thing that was not being used.

FEATURE: You also seem interested in death and resurrection themes.

ENGLEHART: Well, that's the biggest cosmic mystery. That's always been my bottom line: why? I'm not prepared to say nobody knows. I want to see if I can find out. I want to explore mind disciplines, mythologies, anything that might help me get some answers and to help me understand a larger reality.

FEATURE: Is it an accident that your origin of the Kree and the Cotati is somewhat reminiscent of Cain and Abel?

ENGLEHART: I guess it is. I didn't have that in mind at all. I was doing animals and plants. I wasn't thinking of Cain and Abel. But what an archetype. First you get a male and a female, then you do evil. Every story that's ever been told can be related back to Genesis, I suppose.

FEATURE: How about Mantis, who starts out as a prostitute and turns into a goddess and marries a vegetable god? Do you read Robert Graves?

ENGLEHART: I do. In fact, I spent five months living in Majorca, where I started work on the novel. Robert Graves lives in Majorca, and I met him. I'm hip to Robert Graves. One way of dividing life is between animal and vegetable. It's a little tough to talk to minerals. I like the idea of human joining with plant in one way or another. A lot of *The White Goddess* and that sort of thing played around in my mind, but I didn't specifically say that "I'll follow this archetype." But that was there.

FEATURE: What does godhood as defined in the series you wrote mean to you?

ENGLEHART: To me godhood is indefinable. In telling stories you define it enough to make it plausible, but in the final analysis... to me God is beyond. If you could limit it, it wouldn't be God. I was just using it as a token. It means something all-powerful, something on a higher level.

FEATURE: A higher moral level as well as a higher level of power?

ENGLEHART: Yeah. I happen to believe that we're all moving towards something, that there has been an evolution. I believe in a God. I don't believe in an old guy with a white beard, but I believe that there is a unity to all this. If you start studying tarot or astrology, you start seeing it. The bottom line with astrology is that it works. When you study it, you find out that there is a coherent flow to the way events happen, that there are basic archetypes that are true to all races at all times. There's a coherence behind all this seeming diversity, and so the evolution of life from probably a single hydrogen atom to a unicellular organism to a thing that can divide itself to a thing that differentiates itself into a male and female, all the way up to 1980, is all just part of the evolution of everything. Everything is evolving. I believe whatever we're going to call God has evolved. In the old days he seemed to get pissed off pretty easily and destroyed whole civilizations. Lately, we don't see him a whole lot. I don't think that means that he's never really existed, or that he's gone somewhere else or that he's died. It's just that as we accept more responsibility and are more able to be in charge of things... I think we're all headed to the rising and advancing of everybody's spirit. Some people are further along than others.

FEATURE: And do some people go downward?

ENGLEHART: Not in the long run. Life goes up and down, but I think in the long run the later downs are higher than the earlier ups.

FEATURE: As a comics writer you have dealt with villains.

ENGLEHART: I'm no Buddhist, and I don't really have an opinion on whether if you were Dr. Doom in your last life, you'd come back as the Celestial Madonna the next time, and pay off your karma. I don't know about reincarnation.

FEATURE: It seems as though in the *Batman* stories, some of the characters are advancing, but Thorne, for example, ends up insane.

ENGLEHART: We are all limited. I think that the final unity, since it encompasses everything, is not limited. There really isn't any end to the universe — this concept that nobody can put that together: what happens when you get to the end of the universe? No, the universe is complete and there's no such thing when you get out that far as, "Here's the universe and over there is something else." It's coherent. The human mind is limited. You come into existence whether you've been here before or not. You have these strengths and you have these weaknesses, and you've got to play them out. Hopefully, you will work on your best points and not on your worst points. But there are any number of people who feel better about beating people up on the subway, or screwing freelancers. I think I do believe in karma. I do believe that you sort of pay for it all in the end, one way or another, whether you come back and have to live it out or whether you go to purgatory and confront the judge. I think you're responsible for what you do. I also think most people in existence don't know that, and wouldn't believe it if they knew it. There are plenty of people who are living evil lives. But how can you tell any stories without villains? If this is all the result of God sitting up there writing this story for everybody, you need conflict, you need dominance and submission, male and female, yin and yang.

FEATURE: How would you define heroism?

ENGLEHART: Heroism is being heroic. Somebody once asked me how do you write interesting comic books, and I said, "The way to be interesting is to be interesting." What can you say? Heroism is doing the right thing. It isn't necessarily having to make a moral choice. Some people are heroes by nature and they never think about it. Other people do have to make a moral choice: will I go this way or will I go that way?

FEATURE: Of the characters you've worked with, are there any that you think are naturally good or heroic? Is Batman naturally good as opposed to Dr. Strange who had to learn the way?

ENGLEHART: I don't see the Batman in those terms. The Batman does good things but it's all out of obsession. I like the Batman and am in favor of where he's at, but the Batman didn't choose to be a hero. He chose to be an avenger.

People who are naturally good? I'd have to think about that. Nobody really comes to mind.

FEATURE: Did the Batman choose to be heroic or was he

I'M HAPPY THAT THE STRANGE VISION, I DIDN'T LIKE SO FOR A LONG TIME--
-BUT SHE HAS HER DESTINY AND WE HAVE OURS!
THEN, WITH LIGHTENED STEP THEY ADJOURN ONCE MORE TO THE TEMPLE GARDEN--
-THESE SPECIAL MEN AND WOMEN WHO SO SELDOM CELEBRATE JOY--
--AND THERE, TWO MEN WHO ARE MORE THAN MEN STAND PROUDLY BESIDE TWO WOMEN WHO ARE MORE THAN WOMEN--

© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

BEYOND ANY DOUBT, HE KNOWS THIS WAS LEFT HERE FOR HIM--BUT WHO LEFT IT? HOW? AND WHY?
HIS OWN WORDS, ONLY HOURS OLD, COME BACK TO HIM NOW--
--CARRIED ON THE RISING WIND THAT PLASTERS HIS COWL ACROSS HIS CORDED NECK--
--MY WORLD GOES CRAZY SOMETIMES...!
© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

psychologically forced?

ENGLEHART: Psychologically forced. My conception of the Batman was that he was a guy who because of his particular set of circumstances decided that there was evil in the world and that he would counter it. Not for heroic motives, again, but for the fact that what he wanted to do was to find the evil and get rid of it. He's much more, as lots of people like to point out, fascistic than a lot of comic book characters. The Batman is tricky to define because a lot of people think he's a fascist and a lot of people think that he's crazy. I don't agree with either one of those ideas. I think he knows exactly what he's doing at all times. My opinion is that the Batman is right out on the edge of sanity. If he had a shade less self-control he'd go nuts, but he has all the self-control that he needs. And so it's like being a point man, in a sense: he's out amongst them, out where all the danger lies, where the world is insane sometimes. He's an outpost of sanity and he rules it. It's not a question of whether if he did let go he'd go nuts because he's never going to let go. There's no choice to it. That is what he is.

FEATURE: What redeems him from being fascistic?

ENGLEHART: Because he's doing the right thing. In the 1950s the world was right-wing. In the 1960s the world was left-wing. In the 1970s the world was basically left-wing, but let me do my own thing. I happen to think that in the 1980s people are coming back towards more responsibility, which by the time you translate that into a world movement, it's going to mean

"The Batman is right out on the edge of sanity . . .but he has all the self control that he needs."

moving towards fascism again, moving towards Republicanism, towards the right hand side. But the point is, "Who are you in all this?" If the Batman went out there like the Spectre did — find people so he can shove them into the buzz saws — that's fascism. What it comes down to is that the Batman is not fascistic because he's doing the right thing. If he didn't have the control, and didn't know what he was doing out there, he could get carried away, he could do fascistic stuff. But I happen to think that he's a character who's on top of it, so he makes the right decisions, and doesn't persecute people. He doesn't kill people unnecessarily. He kills them if they need it, if it's necessary.

FEATURE: He would?

ENGLEHART: I think he would if the situation demanded it. I don't think he goes looking for it. I believe the part of the DC legend that he doesn't carry a gun because he would rather not kill somebody. But in an extraordinary circumstance, if it was the right thing to do . . . And again, people can quibble and say, "Who's he to decide?" He's who he is. He happens to have the moral equipment to make those judgments. I think he makes the right judgments.

FEATURE: You've used some of the major Batman villains in your stories. There's a school of thought that these are clowns: they're funny, and they can't be done straight. But you used them straight. What do these characters mean to you?

ENGLEHART: They're a part of the Batman. If I'm going to do the Batman, the Joker, the Penguin, and the Riddler all belong in there. But I don't want a guy who's silly. I want a guy who's scary because he's insane. The Penguin: he looks funny, but that's part of the Batman's world. He's living in an insane world.

FEATURE: And so the Penguin's outward appearance and his obsession with birds and umbrellas are signs of a demented mind, not of being a clown?

ENGLEHART: To me the whole world has been defined as being nuts. Gotham City is darker than New York City. They're supposed to be the same, but as I've been walking around New York the last couple of weeks, I find it hard to believe that the Batman would live here. He lives in some sort of darker version of this.

FEATURE: Would you say a nightmare version of New York?

ENGLEHART: Yeah, in a sense. But he's the element of sanity. It's a darker, murkier, more often midnight type of place, so the people who inhabit that world fit in with that. The Penguin and the Joker belong in that world, if you do them believably. The Joker was demonstrably insane in the stuff that I did. He scared you. You didn't laugh and say, "Wow. He can shoot flowers out of his lapels." And that's what makes the Batman even stronger because he's dealing with guys who are really scary.

FEATURE: Did you have trouble turning the Joker into somebody far more insane than ever before?

ENGLEHART: No, because that's the way I liked the Joker. I knew that when I went to DC that I was going to be there for a year while I got my affairs in order, and I wanted to give them the best possible stuff I could give them because they took me in and treated me right. I wanted to really stick it to Marvel as much as I could because they treated me wrong after I'd given them good service for all those years. And as far as I knew, it was my last year in comics and by God, I got into it to have a good time and I didn't want to go out with a lot of bitter memories. I wanted to go out having a good time. And so I put all those things together and was originally going to do seven *Detectives* (it turned out to be eight). I was going to put everything I had left into a character I'd always wanted to do. And that's why I wasn't going to mess around with secondary villains. The Deadshot issue was the extra one that got slipped in at the last minute because the Joker was appearing in *Batman* at the same time and we had to hold back using him. And even with that I was able to do the "Silver St. Cloud discovers Bruce Wayne is the Batman" bit.

FEATURE: Was this entire run, then, planned from the start?

ENGLEHART: Everything is organic. All I knew was that I was

going to kick ass on this book. I was really going to do, to my mind, the definitive *Batman*. I was a fan before I was a writer and I still remember what I liked and what other people liked. I think that's been one of my strengths in comics in that a good number of times people would say, "That's the way it's supposed to be done." I did what I hoped people would think was the right Batman.

I had the idea of having a ghost, the idea of exactly how Silver would work into this; I had an overall view of where I wanted to get to. And then you start throwing in the elements and they start living their own lives. In this case, nobody went off in a totally different direction like Mantis did, but every time I wrote Silver St. Cloud I got to know her better, and then I could see what this half-formed character could end up doing in relation to the Batman. And then I started sending her in that direction.

When I picked Hugo Strange originally, it was because he had that nice 1940s flavor of the mad doctor in the laboratory, and I picked him because of his last name.

I also wanted to develope Bruce Wayne more than had been done. I wanted to play off both sides of his personality. I found that the Batman was such a great concept that if I stayed on the series, I probably would have deemphasized Bruce after Silver left him. I wouldn't have given him up, but I don't think I could have continued doing Bruce Wayne for months and months. He wasn't as interesting as the Batman.

Over the course of the seven years I wrote comics I wrote a lot of different scripts and a lot of different characters, and sometimes, every once in a while, it all came together. When I wrote those Batman scripts — they were scripted in advance, it wasn't done Marvel style — I didn't have the slightest idea who was going to draw them. I really expected, given the breadth of talent at DC at that time, I could easily have ended up with a couple of house hacks. The scripts would have been exactly the same but the impact would have been nowhere near the same. But through fortunate circumstances, here came Marshall Rogers, and here came Terry Austin, and John Workman to do the lettering. Everything worked. It happened before on *Dr. Strange*: first I had Brunner and then I had Colan, both of them real good, and different. Comics are a hybrid medium, and when Brunner left and Colan came in, even though I was still writing them, there was a difference to my mind. Yet in both cases I had excellent artists, and although it was different, the book remained on the same level. I would also apply this to *Captain America* with Sal Buscema. Sal Buscema takes a lot of shit because he's "just a comic book artist." He's a damn good comic book artist. I had other artists to whom I would send plots and they would not feel like drawing that this month so they'd send back something different. It would be a struggle all the time. You could tell Sal Buscema anything and there it would be. Nicely, clearly delineated. No problems. *Captain America* was a lot of fun for me to write. I think *Captain America* was another case in which everybody involved with it was in the right place he had to be. Marshall or Frank or Gene do put something extra into it, so there is a difference, but I was very happy with the way *Captain America* turned out.

FEATURE: What do you think about Batman's capacity for love? Is he somebody who can never fall in love as Denny O'Neil thinks?

ENGLEHART: I think he's human. You go back to his origin: it all comes out of a little boy who's so overwhelmed with emotion that he makes a vow that he's still keeping twenty years later under the most adverse circumstances. He was in love with Silver St. Cloud. I pretty much explained in the story that he's not the kind of guy who would ever give up being the Batman. The Batman comes first. I cannot imagine Bruce Wayne ever throwing it all over for anything: love, hate, money . . . nothing could tempt him to give up the Batman. But he can certainly fall in love, and it was tragic in this situation. But he's not cold. He's controlled, but he's a fully developed emotional person inside. I don't believe that he would stand around going "Arrgh" all the time. He wouldn't let his emotions rule him. In that respect I disagree with Denny's interpretation of the Batman. His was an excellent Batman for the time. I'm not saying Denny O'Neil had no sense for the Batman. He did. He had an excellent sense. The more human Batman is not the one that I believe in. And the one that we've got now, that Len is writing, is too human for my tastes. He has too many hang-ups and gets into his emotions too much.

FEATURE: Well, he's got human emotions, but the grim facade comes first?

ENGLEHART: Yeah. The grim facade is immovable. He can be

"You could tell Sal Buscema anything and there it would be. Nicely, clearly delineated. He's a damn good comic artist."

THE RACE DOWN SHADOWED CORRIDORS IS SWIFT AND SHORT!
-UNNH!-
ALL RIGHT, MISTER: END OF THE LINE!
NOW LET'S JUST HAVE A LOOK UNDERNEATH YOUR COWL BEFORE--
GOOD LORD! YOU!?!
BUT YOU-- YOU'RE--
EXACTLY! BUT HIGH POLITICAL OFFICE DIDN'T SATISFY ME! MY POWER WAS STILL TOO CONSTRAINED BY LEGALITIES!

©1980 Marvel Comics Group

hurt, he can be beat up, but the control that comes from doing what he's doing is so great. I couldn't put it any better than I did at the end of the last *Batman* story I did: he breaks up with Silver, he's tight-lipped, he's not paying any attention to Commissioner Gordon, but he's in control. He's not screaming or crying, and he just swings away. He's got to get off by himself, he's got to lick his wounds, perhaps. But that's for himself, in his cave, alone.

FEATURE: You say that you feel the Batman is completely mature emotionally, but do you think there's anything infantile about the fact that he's still so haunted and obsessed by his parents' deaths?

ENGLEHART: I don't see him being at all immature. Captain America, in a sense, I might say that about because he still believes in the ideal in the fact of adverse reality. Captain America, as I did him, said in the final analysis, "A lot of people don't believe in this, but I have to, and I do." The Batman does not fly in the face of reality. The Batman is reality incarnate in the crazy world. I think he knows himself better than anybody else. The Batman fully understands what he's doing, why he's doing it, but he's grown up. He's not still a little kid living out a childhood battle. He's devoted his life to it, but he's now an adult living with his full capacities.

FEATURE: What do you think of the Batman's past major romantic interests, the Catwoman and Talia? You did Silver instead. Do you think there's been anything misconceived about his past romantic involvements?

ENGLEHART: Any character who's been around for forty years has gone through different phases and different periods and different interpretations and different creative teams and different editors. As far as I'm concerned, if I were to put together an anthology of the only Batman stuff that means anything, on one level I could cut out everything from 1941 until 1977. Certainly I would throw out all that stuff in the early 1960s in which Batman meets monsters every issue. I happen to really admire Dick Sprang, who drew most of the major stuff in the 1950s, and Jerry Robinson and people like that. So I certainly couldn't throw out *everything* between 1941 and 1977. The stuff before 1941 is my favorite stuff. It had the writing. To digress for a second, writers are biased in favor of writing, and artists are biased in favor of art. When I was doing the Celestial Madonna stuff, I was living with Jim Starlin and I got really excited about something I had done and I said, "What do you think, Jim?" And he said, "Well, I don't really read *The Avengers*." "What do you mean you don't read *The Avengers*?" He said, "Well, the art is so bad that I really can't get into it." I said, "Forget the art. Read the story." He said, "I'm an artist. I've got to have something to look at." And it works the other way around: I can appreciate the pictures, and would say that the art is the major component in a comic book, but if there's nothing to read, then I'll just flip the pages and say, "To hell with it."

So the Catwoman, to my knowledge — I may not have read every Catwoman story ever printed — has never really been good enough to be a real serious romantic thing for the Batman. They said she was, but she's never shown enough moxey, enough intrigue and strength to be a romantic interest. Talia comes out of the excellent stuff that Denny and Neal were doing. Somehow she never grabbed me. First of all, I wouldn't have brought Talia back because she's Denny's character. If anybody's going to write about Talia and Ra's Al-Ghul, it ought to be Denny. Second, she's never really impressed me completely enough. There was some excellent stuff being done with her, but somehow I never really felt that the Batman cared a whole lot about her.

FEATURE: The point I'm trying to get at is that when I think of romantic interests for the Batman, I think of Batwoman, who is another superhero, Catwoman and Talia who are on the opposite side of the law for the most part, and Vicki Vale, who was a third rate Lois Lane. Then I think of Silver St. Cloud, a normal woman who's not a superhero, not a super-villainess and not a snoopy nuisance. Do you think that the Batman would be attracted to someone who's outside the insane world that he's involved in?

ENGLEHART: I would think so because he's primarily a loner. When I was writing the series, I wanted to do a story with Robin, and I did. And then I got rid of Robin the next issue. Batman and Robin is a whole different vibe from the Batman. And the Batman and Catwoman or the Batman and Batwoman doesn't compute for me. I don't see him working with a partner. So I tend to think that anybody he'd seriously consider spending his life with would have to be somebody who would have to accept the fact that this is what he did, who wouldn't be unable to accept it as Silver was. But I don't think it would be anybody out there on the front lines with him.

FEATURE: Would it also be important that somebody he'd fall in love with be his tie to the normal world?

ENGLEHART: No, because he doesn't need that. I say again, he's in control of it and he doesn't need help, anywhere. Silver wasn't important to him because she was a convention coordinator who was good looking. She was important to him because she was Silver St. Cloud, whom he loved. And everything else she was was incidental. I don't think she was his touchstone to reality.

FEATURE: It seems as though in some of your stories the Batman feels a kind of envy of people who can live normal lives.

ENGLEHART: No. There's a scene in the Deadshot issue in which he's walking along thinking that Bruce Wayne is only a mask for the Batman. There was never any question in my mind, and I think I wrote it that way, what he would choose if it came time to choose. He recognizes the fact that he's given up some of the benefits that just being Bruce Wayne would accrue to him, but he would never consider chucking it all and just being Bruce Wayne. I don't think he envies other people. I think he's very happy with who he is. He makes the right decisions. He's not fooling himself on any level. He understands that it's costing him to do this, that because he couldn't tell Silver who he is, Bruce Wayne is not as real as the Batman. He knew all along that it was going to cost him Silver St. Cloud unless she could accept him. Then they could work something out. If she couldn't, he couldn't move from where he was.

FEATURE: Why did Hugo Strange decide to defend the Batman

to the death?

ENGLEHART: It's a question of values. He had his pride, he had his respect, and he had pride and respect for the Batman. And he wasn't going to give it up to this two-bit thug, which is what he considered Boss Thorne to be.

FEATURE: In the closing lines of that issue, Thorne says about Strange, "You'd think he was the Batman." Is the Batman, in effect, what Hugo Strange always wanted to be?

ENGLEHART: It could be.

FEATURE: His ghost helps the Batman in the final issue.

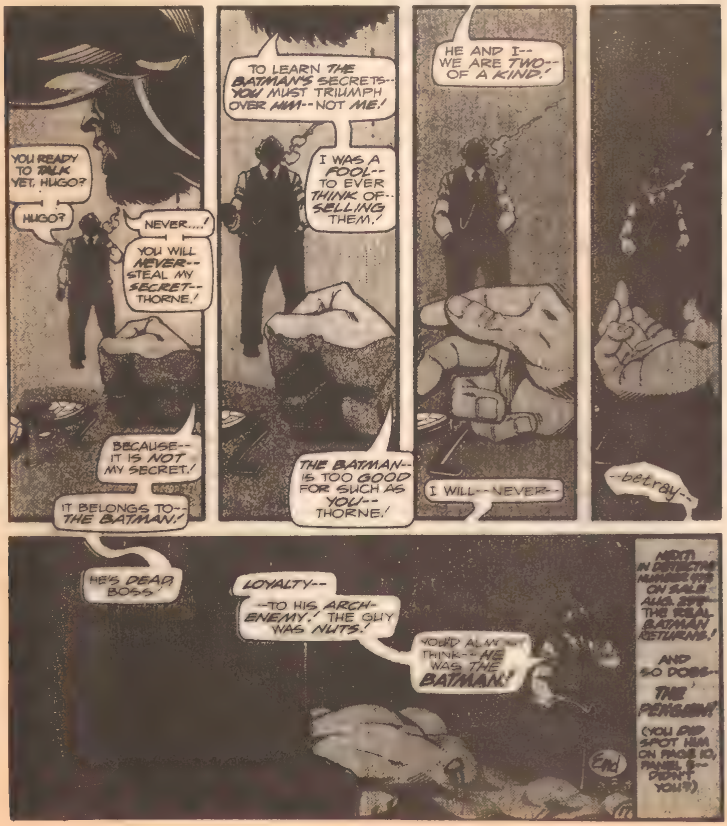
ENGLEHART: Yeah, but before he dies, Hugo Strange wants to beat the Batman, and he's certainly not going to help anybody else beat the Batman. "The Batman is too good for you," he says. "If anybody's going to do it, it's going to be me." After he dies, he wants to get the guy who killed him, so he helps the Batman to destroy the guy who killed him.

FEATURE: The Joker, too, doesn't want anybody else to kill the Batman.

ENGLEHART: Well, I didn't invent that one. The Joker has always considered himself to be that good.

FEATURE: The difference seems to be that the Joker doesn't want to *be* the Batman and Hugo Strange seems to want to.

ENGLEHART: The Joker wants to be to criminality what the Batman is to law enforcement. He wants to be *the* most crazy guy in the dark side of the Batman's crazy world. Hugo Strange just wants to beat the Batman. He wants to win in order to accomplish his goals, but not in order that he can become the number one villain around. He's essentially a second rank villain, in that he's not trying to take over the world or be the one man who becomes the archetype of the Batman's enemy. He just wants to get the money out of the Wayne Foundation, he wants to sell the Batman's secret identity, and that's enough for him. But he respects the Batman. I would think that if they were torturing the Joker, the Joker would also refuse to tell, but for the different reasons that I've mentioned. If they were torturing the Penguin, I'm not so sure the Penguin wouldn't speak right up. The Penguin is not about to die in order to save the Batman's identity because he's got a whole different trip.


YOU READY TO TALK YET, HUGO?
HUGO?
NEVER....!
YOU WILL NEVER-- STEAL MY SECRET-- THORNE!
BECAUSE-- IT IS NOT MY SECRET!
IT BELONGS TO-- THE BATMAN!
TO LEARN THE BATMAN'S SECRETS-- YOU MUST TRIUMPH OVER HIM-- NOT ME!
I WAS A FOOL-- TO EVER THINK OF-- SELLING THEM!
THE BATMAN-- IS TOO GOOD FOR SUCH AS YOU-- THORNE!
HE AND I-- WE ARE TWO-- OF A KIND!
I WILL-- NEVER--
--betray--
HE'S DEAD BOSS!
LOYALTY--
--TO HIS ARCH-ENEMY! THE GUY WAS NUTS!
YOU'D ALMOST THINK-- HE WAS THE BATMAN!
NEXT IN ISSUE NUMBER--- ON SALE AUG. 5TH: THE 80th BATMAN RETURNS!
AND SO DOES-- THE PENGUIN!
(YOU DID SPOT HIM ON PAGE 10, PANEL 5-- DIDN'T YOU?)
END

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

The Penguin, I think, would save himself first and say, "Okay, Thorne, it's Bruce Wayne. Now let me go." Hugo Strange just has that sort of Old World respect that in this game of cops and robbers you know who's good at it and who isn't, and you shouldn't betray the good guys.

FEATURE: In effect, then, Hugo Strange looks at the Batman as a professional who just happens to be working on the opposite side, but who deserves his admiration. Whereas to the Joker the Batman is just a target who has to get knocked off for him to be number one.

ENGLEHART: Yeah. The Joker would never kill the Batman. He wants to be the guy who defeats the Batman, but he doesn't want him dead because then there would be nothing left for the Joker to do. Hugo Strange doesn't care. If the Batman had died, he would have saluted him as a gallant foe, and he would have gone to fight Superman next week, or something like that.

FEATURE: You've said in a letter column that the Secret Empire story in *Captain America* wasn't written exactly the way you would have preferred. How would it have been different?

ENGLEHART: Actually, by the time it got through it was pretty close. What I wanted to do up front was government officials. At Marvel they said, "No, you can't do that. Make them advertising men." Actually they became advertising men who were tied in with the government so I got to where I wanted to go. I was trying to write topical fiction and fortunately Watergate went on for so long that I could do that. In the story after that, the Serpent Squad was supposed to be the SLA and that whole urban terrorist trip. By the time I got through with that story the SLA was six months gone. After that I decided to go back to the Red Skull. There was a real desire on my part to write topical American stories with Captain America, but the publishing lag was too long to pull that off.

FEATURE: Number One of the Secret Empire was of course Richard Nixon.

ENGLEHART: Of course. Who else would it be? That was exactly the time. I know when I turned it in, they called me up from Marvel in New York and said, "This isn't Nixon, is it?" And I swore up and down that it wasn't because I thought they'd change it if they thought it was. But once it was in print, I had no problem admitting it. But I was more interested in Captain America's head. The villains were all secondary. The Secret Empire was a solid story, good villain stuff and that sort of thing, but I primarily wanted Captain America to face reality. I took the most topical example I could get to force him to do that. My major emphasis was having Captain America turning into the Nomad and reexamine himself rather than "Let's do a Richard Nixon/Watergate" story.

FEATURE: The story implies that Cap helped cover up Number One's death. Was that the right thing for him to do? Later on, Dr. Strange comments in his own book that Nixon resigned.

ENGLEHART: That's actually a loose end. I never resolved it one way or another in my own mind. People kept referring thereafter to "the White House suicide," but nobody seemed to know exactly who it was who commited suicide. I guess it is an inconsistency on my part to have said that stuff later in *Dr. Strange*. Thinking back six years, everybody was living in post-Watergate America while the Nomad sequence was going on, so I guess they all knew that the President had been Number One. If I had really thought about that, I probably could have done more with it. As far as Cap covering up, I never really thought about it.

FEATURE: Did Cap's identity crisis and his anguish over his ideals being betrayed have anything to do with the things you were feeling at the time? Was Cap acting out your feeling about Watergate, Viet Nam, and so forth?

ENGLEHART: All of that. But again, I'm working for the company and the Captain America that I wrote was an attempt to do

> "If your name is Captain America, you should be political."

the advancing and the rising of a spirit, but the spirit was already defined. I didn't come in and say, "Okay, now Steve Englehart gets a chance to write his own character for Captain America." I took the guy as he existed and then moved him in the direction I wanted him to go. But I don't think anybody who was reading my stuff felt that this was somebody pretending to be Captain America. I wasn't trying to use it as a soapbox. It was "Who is this guy? He's not just anybody. He's Captain America, which means something. What does it mean?" Captain America in 1974 would have had to go through all that because of what America was going through. If I were writing *Captain America* today, he'd be going through different trips, probably without as much anguish and introspection because none of us are going through as much anguish and introspection over America these days.

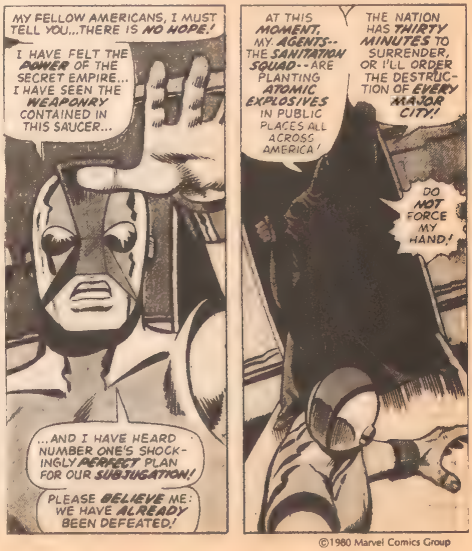
FEATURE: Were you happy with your transformation of the Watergate affair into comics, having the President try to take over the country through nuclear blackmail? Or, in retrospect, do you feel it was too hyperbolic?

ENGLEHART: No. I think it was okay for comics. I don't think I could have just done the actual Watergate sequence thinly disguised in comics. It would have been too tendentious and too slow moving. I took the comic book way out: I turned them into super-villains. But their basic thrust and basic result of what happened was the same.

FEATURE: In order to do this you had to turn Nixon into a would-be dictator.

ENGLEHART: But I think he was.

FEATURE: Who would have killed the populations of whole cities?


MY FELLOW AMERICANS, I MUST TELL YOU...THERE IS NO HOPE.
I HAVE FELT THE POWER OF THE SECRET EMPIRE... I HAVE SEEN THE WEAPONRY CONTAINED IN THIS SAUCER...
...AND I HAVE HEARD NUMBER ONE'S SHOCKINGLY PERFECT PLAN FOR OUR SUBJUGATION!
PLEASE BELIEVE ME: WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN DEFEATED!
AT THIS MOMENT, MY AGENTS--THE SANITATION SQUAD--ARE PLANTING ATOMIC EXPLOSIVES IN PUBLIC PLACES ALL ACROSS AMERICA!
THE NATION HAS THIRTY MINUTES TO SURRENDER, OR I'LL ORDER THE DESTRUCTION OF EVERY MAJOR CITY!
DO NOT FORCE MY HAND!

©1980 Marvel Comics Group

ENGLEHART: If Nixon had been in that position, I think he would have done it. Nixon was out for number one. He was out for power and didn't really care a whole lot about people. He was quite willing to kill Vietnamese and to wiretap his own people. These days, because the people who followed him were so inept, he's beginning to regain some stature. What I couldn't and still can't get behind with Nixon is that the President is supposed to be the guy we can all rally around. He's supposed to be a sort of symbol for the country, and a guy who's in that position who did what Nixon did, and would plunge the country into that much chaos and backbiting and agony to save his own single self, is reprehensible. He screwed up the country, the things Americans believed in and walked away from it. I find that to be a high moral crime, in addition to everything else that he did. He did worse things to America than the Russians did during that whole period. As an American, I'm no right-winger, but as somebody who lives in this country and has a stake in it, I find that to be really reprehensible.

I would say also that a guy who comes along after that when America is wounded and promises that he'll never lie to us and that he'll be the great moral president we're all looking for, and then gets into office and starts lying to us, is a lot more reprehensible. I think Carter is a lot more morally reprehensible than people give him credit for being. A lot of people think he's incompetent, but at least he's a nice guy. I'm not even so sure of that. I think somebody who would come along when you're down and promise you just what you want knowing all the time that he's not going to deliver it is not too hot either.

FEATURE: Having done stories in *Captain America* about Watergate, and stories about the oil company Roxxon with a liberal focus, how do you answer criticism from people who say politics should stay out of superhero comics? And how do you feel about people who write superhero comics from a conservative viewpoint, like Ditko?

ENGLEHART: I say to the first group of people: "Fuck you!" I don't think anything needs to be in or out of comics. I don't think the medium should be limited. To the second group of people: "Fine." I wrote the Batman and I didn't write him as a liberal. I think Denny O'Neil made him too liberal. I just wrote characters. Captain America had been a liberal long before I got him, with his black partner and cleaning up the slums. That was who he was. As for my personal political beliefs, I believe in pragmatism. If you need to tighten things up to get things accomplished, then do it. If you need to liberalize them because there's too much fascism going on, then let's do it. It comes back to what I said about the Batman: it's figuring out what's right to do and doing it. If you think comic books are screwed up, then get out. Don't sit there and say, "I'm getting screwed every day but there's nothing I can do about it." And if comic books are resurging and there's great things going on, then get in. It's whatever is happening at the time. I have no objection to Steve Ditko doing *Mr. A*. I don't think it's real good comics. In the way it's presented, it's too tendentious, but if Steve Ditko can deliver an interesting character who is a right-wing fanatic, I don't care. If you can deliver an interesting character who's a left-wing revolutionary, it's fine by me. I gotta be interesting. I want to enjoy myself when I'm reading comics. If it's good, then it's good.

FEATURE: There is a school of thought that says that heroes should not be given particular political stands. If a conservative writer takes over *Captain America*, for example, from a liberal writer, the character may change dramatically.

ENGLEHART: I don't buy it, particularly with Captain America. He isn't the Batman, he isn't Mr. Fantastic, or Daredevil. As Captain America he's got to be involved with America. That book — and this is another of my accomplishments in comics — was bottom of the line in sales for years. Stan obviously didn't care at all. When it came time to devoting his energies, *Captain America* was getting the least amount of it. For fifty issues it had just been lying there; there was no sense of why this guy had to exist. He was just another guy in a costume who shouted slogans once in a while. That seems to me to be what he's come back to, too. People think that if he's Captain America, he has to go around saying vaguely ridiculous patriotic things. That's not it. The guy is commited to America. So first of all you have to figure out what America is and what he would be thinking about. Then, he doesn't have to be ridiculous; he doesn't have to be a cornball, patriotic banana. He can be whatever he's supposed to be at the time to get America across. When I took it over, they told me that the only Captain America stories that had ever sold were the Sleeper stories in *Tales of Suspense*. Everything else had just died. By the time I got it it was in danger of being cancelled. Within six months I had it at the top of the line and it stayed at the top of the line the whole time I wrote it. As soon as I left, it went right back into the toilet, and it's been at the bottom of the line ever since.

If your name is Captain America, you should be political. The only thing I object to is that if you're fitting it into continuity, it's not your character and I think it would be wrong to come in and say, "Okay, he's been liberal for four years but I'm a conservative writer. Therefore, he's now conservative." If I thought he should get more conservative, I'd take six months to get him there. I'd give him a reason to reevaluate himself. But you can't change him overnight if there's any sense of real continuity, any coherence in the Marvel Universe.

FEATURE: How would your Shang-Chi have changed and evolved as opposed to what Doug Moench did with the character?

ENGLEHART: It would have been more concerned with consciousness than with action. I say again that Moench and Gulacy, particularly, did some wonderful stuff with that. I haven't followed it for the last two years, but I picked up some recent issues from Marvel and they look decent. When Starlin and I created *Master of Kung Fu* we were unabashedly ripping off the *Kung Fu* television series. What I wanted to do was the higher consciousness, inner peace number: this guy would be in the melodramatic situation of having Fu Manchu for a father, but what would it do to him? Again, I'm operating out of the character. I got five issues into it and they called me up and said, "Stan rode up on an elevator today and heard two guys talking. One guy said, 'What's the hottest thing in movies these days?' and the other guy said, 'Kung fu movies and the reason why is because it's wall to wall violence.' " Stan got off the elevator, walked to Marvel Comics and said, "Let's do wall to wall violence." They called me up and said, "We don't want any more of this philosophy. We just want kung fu fights." I

said, "Not for me. This isn't the guy I set out to write. This isn't the guy Starlin and I created." They did the fights for a while and then to Doug's credit—although my Shang-Chi would never have joined up with the secret police agencies of the western world to fight Fu Manchu—he defined a balance between doing violent stories and still dealing with consciousness in there.

FEATURE: Shang-Chi, of late, has had very conflicting emotions about working for Nayland Smith.

ENGLEHART: Exactly. That's why I can accept it. It's different, but it's not so different [from my conception]. The first year after I left, the book was wall to wall violence. It was just stupid stories of people fighting each other. When Gulacy came in, the sequences began to get more esoteric.

FEATURE: Did you have any particular testing points for Shang-Chi, stages for him to pass through?

ENGLEHART: No, because you never know how long you're going to do something in comics. The one time that I really tried to work out everything in advance was with Star-Lord, where I had twelve stories in mind. I got to do one of them. Seeing only that first episode was like seeing only the splash page of a story. You saw that Star-Lord was totally obnoxious and did not belong on Earth and by the end of the story he's out where he belongs. Then we would have seen eleven more chapters of what he did when he got out there. I had three stories lined up for *Dr. Strange* when I quit in the middle of the "Occult History of America" sequence. But Shang-Chi was just going to develop organically. Where he would get to, what he would resolve with Fu Manchu and all that, I didn't know.

I love the character of Fu Manchu. I like dark and lurky characters: Batman, ad infinitum. I love Fu Manchu for all the melodrama involved, and I thought it would be interesting to have somebody like Shang-Chi, who had a higher consciousness, but who was really naive at first, involved with a world-wide empire of evil. I think it's perfectly true that, as Doug found out, you can't do Fu Manchu every issue.

FEATURE: It was once rumored that there was going to be a Fu Manchu series set in the 1930s. Were you going to handle that?

ENGLEHART: Yeah. That was going to be by Frank Brunner and me, and then Marvel put it off and put it off and finally it fell apart.

FEATURE: Why was Shang-Chi made a half-Caucasian?

ENGLEHART: That was an editorial decision. Stan thought that the readers wouldn't be able to identify with a guy who was all Chinese.

FEATURE: How do you respond to the criticism that Fu Manchu is a racial stereotype? Even Mantis has been accused of being a racial stereotype.

ENGLEHART: I'm really out of sympathy with that. I can understand how you can get to that point, how the "Yellow Peril" is an unfortunate remnant of an earlier and less enlightened age. To me, Fu Manchu is a great villain. Dr. Doom has his reasons, The Joker has his reasons, Fu Manchu has his reasons. I never thought of Fu Manchu as Chinese, as a "Yellow Peril." I didn't expect anybody to believe in the "Yellow Peril." He just happens to be a guy who comes from China, who's got the characteristics of a mandarin, a brain on the scale of Shakespeare's, with cat-green eyes that glow in the dark and who keeps intelligent spiders in his opium den. I like that shit and that's all I really cared about. When people started writing in saying, "This is a racial stereotype," it wasn't my intent.

FEATURE: In effect, he wants to turn the world into imperial China just as Dr Doom wants to turn the world into medieval Latveria.

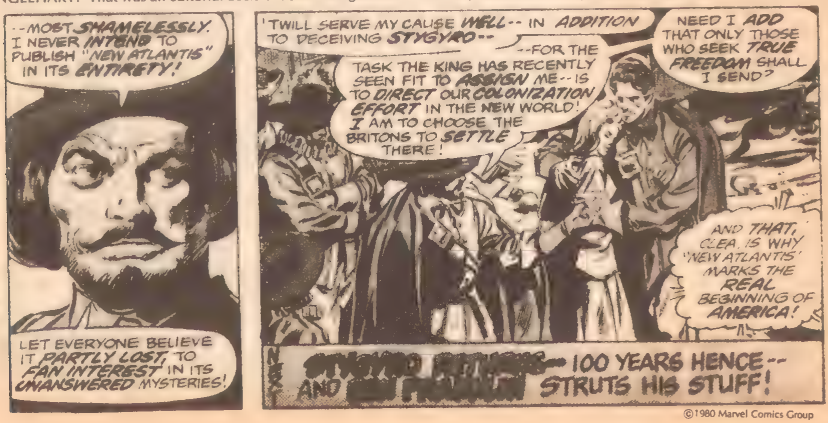
ENGLEHART: Exactly. If there really were any Latverians out there, I'm sure they'd feel very offended by Dr. Doom's portrayal. If there are any people who belong to the Empire out there, they'd probably feel badly about the way Darth Vader gets portrayed. And Mantis . . .

FEATURE: Some criticism was made that Orientals don't go around saying, "This One" all the time.

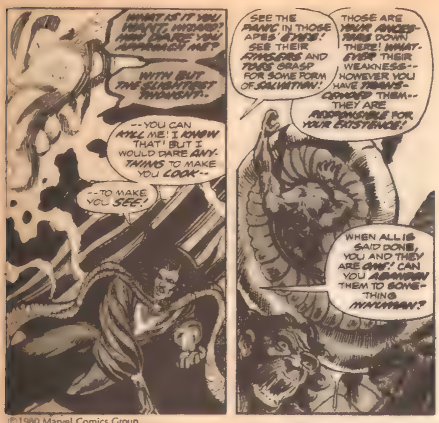
ENGLEHART: No, of course not, but that was her. She was trained by the intergalactic priesthood. She, again, is only half-Vietnamese; you were supposed to *think* that she was only a hooker from Saigon, but she soon became something else. I didn't set out to offend anybody. I think it's a little hypersensitivity on the critics' part if they read that into it. They're not going to read that book and find racist stuff.

FEATURE: Where was the Occult History of America heading in *Dr. Strange*?

ENGLEHART: To the night they signed the Declaration of Independence. All that stuff is based on occult legends, and it seemed like the thing to do for the Bicentennial. In real life all the Founding Fathers were Freemasons. The Freemasons in those days were an occult society, and also an old-boy network, in a sense. They couldn't shoot rays out of their palms,


--MOST SHAMELESSLY. I NEVER INTEND TO PUBLISH "NEW ATLANTIS" IN ITS ENTIRETY!
LET EVERYONE BELIEVE IT PARTLY LOST, TO FAN INTEREST IN ITS UNANSWERED MYSTERIES!
'TWILL SERVE MY CAUSE WELL-- IN ADDITION TO DECEIVING STYGYRO--
--FOR THE TASK THE KING HAS RECENTLY SEEN FIT TO ASSIGN ME-- IS TO DIRECT OUR COLONIZATION EFFORT IN THE NEW WORLD! I AM TO CHOOSE THE BRITONS TO SETTLE THERE!
NEED I ADD THAT ONLY THOSE WHO SEEK TRUE FREEDOM SHALL I SEND?
AND THAT, CLEA, IS WHY "NEW ATLANTIS" MARKS THE REAL BEGINNING OF AMERICA!
100 YEARS HENCE-- STRUTS HIS STUFF!

©1980 Marvel Comics Group


WHAT IS IT YOU WANT, WIZARD? AND LIFE YOU APPROACH ME?
WITH BUT THE SLIGHTEST THOUGHT.
--YOU CAN ASK ME! I KNOW THAT! BUT I WOULD DARE ANY-THING TO MAKE YOU LOOK--
--TO MAKE YOU SEE!
SEE THE PANIC IN THOSE APES EYES! SEE THEIR FINGERS AND TOES GRASP FOR SOME FORM OF SALVATION!
THOSE ARE YOUR ANCESTORS DOWN THERE! WHATEVER THEIR WEAKNESSES-- HOWEVER YOU HAVE CHANGED-- GROWN THEM-- THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR EXISTENCE!
WHEN ALL IS SAID DONE, YOU AND THEY ARE ONE! CAN YOU ABANDON THEM TO SOME-THING WORTHLESS?
©1980 Marvel Comics Group

either, but they were all trying to create an enlightened world. They were the best people of the time, they hung out together, they studied astrology and they studied tarot.

FEATURE: And Franklin and Washington were in the line of people who were following Francis Bacon's instructions down through the centuries?

ENGLEHART: That's all true. Francis Bacon was a heavy Freemason with a heavy idea of how to create a perfect world and he was in charge of colonizing America. So he sent the people over there who would be able to do what he wanted and all the people who signed the Declaration of Independence were people who considered themselves extremely enlightened and were trying to set up a system that would create a perfect society. Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, the top generals in the army were all Masons.

The trip was that there's an occult legend that the night they all sat down to write the Declaration of Independence, a mysterious man in black showed up and told them what they needed to know and then vanished from a locked room. Just a legend, but decent material for *Dr. Strange*, and so I created Stygero. The third episode would have been the night of July 4th: mystical battles while they're writing the Declaration. The fourth episode would have been coming back to 1976 and finding Stygero still around. The trip was that he was living off American patriotism: the energy involved in that was what he hooked onto as a vampire. So he was still around two hundred years later because America did get formed. It's a power source, and he's a vampire.

Then I was going to do a sequence with Lord Phyffe. What I wanted to do with Lord Phyffe was basically, hundreds of years before, the Phyffe family was cursed and the curse would affect the tenth generation. Lord Phyffe was the ninth generation until the world was destroyed [by Eternity] and everybody was replaced. Then he realized that he was the tenth and he was going back to England. I would have done a British demon story. Then I was going to do a story in which Dr. Strange meets Fu Manchu, with Shang-Chi in the middle. That was going to be the next nine months. That was the only series that I left with a lot of undone plans. These were all stories that suggested themselves to me when I was working my way through the series.

FEATURE: Is Fu Manchu adept enough at sorcery to pose a threat to Dr. Strange?

ENGLEHART: Yes. I don't know that he's a sorcerer so much, but he's got a lot of occult knowledge. He could have put up a battle.

FEATURE: What was the reason behind having Clea having an affair with Benjamin Franklin, an event which Marv Wolfman later claimed was a phony?

ENGLEHART: Because Benjamin Franklin had affairs with everybody he could get his hands on. It seemed like an interesting bit. And Clea was always in the background. After Dr. Strange met Death, I had Dr. Strange meet Love, with Mother Nature, Dormammu and Umar, and that's where Doc and Clea really solidified themselves as more equals and as being solidly in love. But Strange is basically a loner and Clea didn't appear a whole lot during that series and I figured she would probably get antsy about it. Plus the fact that, while Franklin is a pot bellied guy who's balding, at the same time he succeded at having affairs. He must have been a real good womanizer. He must have had something that would get all these women to go to bed with him. So in that last issue, which was written after I had quit, I'm sure it looked a little abrupt that she would go to bed with this guy. But if I had continued on the series, I would have expanded on that. Clea was a princess. She's not prepared to sit around and be the little wife while Strange is out doing what ever. Where it would have gone, I don't know.

"The end product in *Giant-Size Avengers* #2 I consider to be one of the three or four best stories that I ever wrote."

©1980 Marvel Comics Group

FEATURE: Did you mean Sise-Neg to be the Judeo-Christian God, or was he another one of these gods who hang around the Marvel Universe?

ENGLEHART: I suppose he was the Judeo-Christian God. It was a story. People always write in letters and say, "Aha. I understood the Freudian significance of this." And that may work, but I didn't necessarily have it in mind. But yes, he's supposed to be the Judeo-Christian God, but I don't want to start arguing theology about whether that invalidates the Judeo-Christian God or whether that eliminates the Buddhist God.

FEATURE: What does Sise-Neg have to say about your concept of God? You said earlier that God, too, was a product of evolution. Here we have another advancing and rising of the spirit: Sise-Neg starts off as an amoral being who has the good angel and the bad angel—Strange and Mordo—talking in each ear and finally comes to this realization that all is as it should be.

ENGLEHART: That's consistent with my philosophy. I think that God's opinions have changed over time. He operates differently today. I call him "he" for convenience's sake. you don't see a lot of pillars of fire these days. But it was basically a riff: Dr. Strange meets God. Dr. Strange meets Death. Dr. Strange meets Love. Dr. Strange meets himself. Dr. Strange meets the devil and goes to hell. I was trying to do cosmic concepts within the framework of seventeen page stories. It's not a treatise on philosophical reality. Again, with a novel I could have developed that idea as much as I wanted to, as completely as I could.

FEATURE: How did you get the idea to tie Kang in with Immortus?

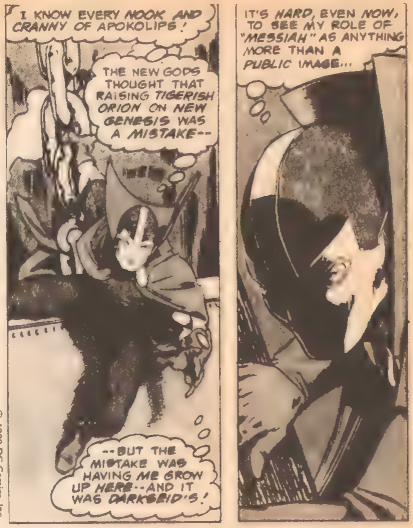
ENGLEHART: He always was, I think.

FEATURE: Kang, Rama-Tut and the Scarlet Centurion had been stated to be the same person; Dr. Doom and Rama-Tut postulated that they might be the same person. You were the one who first tied Immortus in with them.

ENGLEHART: Maybe I did invent that. It's off in the mist of time now. There were so many guys wandering around who were immortal and who were each other. It seemed like it would work. That whole thing was an experiment which I'm willing to admit now probably didn't work quite right. I really liked the concept of Kang being able to fight it out with the Avengers for four issues, get the shit beaten out of him, escape into the future, spend fifteen years coming up with another perfect plot, come back thirty seconds after he left and hit them again while they're still dusting themselves off. People began to write in and say, "Why is it always Kang? Let's have some different super-villains," I can see a validity in that objection within what comic books are: you don't want to see the same guy all the time. I tried it again later in the *Justice League* with the Construct. I'm not certain that worked exactly right, either. I liked it, but maybe it was too much too soon. But I really did like the first Kang story in which we find out about the Celestial Madonna. I really liked the second one, the one with Immortus, where I did the bit where he goes away, works everything out and comes back. The third one, the western . . .I still like the idea of going back into the past and meeting all the western characters, and there were some nice bits having Thor and Moondragon riding horses, but it began to lose some of its energy by that time. The final appearance of Kang and Immortus was not hot enough to be a sufficient climax.

FEATURE: You meant to finish them off permanently?

ENGLEHART: I suppose, but even I might have brought them back sometime if I had a reason to do it. It's like what I was saying about Mantis and Willow before: the first two times that I used that character, I thought I was finished with her. But then another opportunity came along where it looked like she'd fit in nicely.


I KNOW EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY OF APOKOLIPS!
THE NEW GODS THOUGHT THAT RAISING TIGERISH ORION ON NEW GENESIS WAS A MISTAKE--
--BUT THE MISTAKE WAS HAVING ME GROW UP HERE--AND IT WAS DARKSEID'S!
IT'S HARD, EVEN NOW, TO SEE MY ROLE OF "MESSIAH" AS ANYTHING MORE THAN A PUBLIC IMAGE...

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

FEATURE: Was it important to your conception of Immortus that he started out presumably as Dr. Doom, and then Kang, that he was evil and then reformed to becoem a benevolent deity?

ENGLEHART: By the time I did them for the third time, I didn't have a whole lot of unthought thoughts about who those people were. I believe that he was benevolent. I did that whole trip about how he had reformed as Rama-Tut, had gone into the future in order to stop himself as Kang from doing evil. Immortus was the benevolent end product of all that.

I really started to kick out when I got my shot at the *Giant-Size Avengers*. I wanted to do stories that continued thoughout the regular and Giant-Size issues and I worked out this extremely convoluted plotline. Time paradoxes are incredible when you try to work them out, because if you have any loose ends, they don't work. I was really proud of that when I got it together. When I sent it to the artist who drew it—he was new to Marvel and I'm not here to criticize—he didn't draw what I asked him to draw. I took the extreme action of cutting up some of his pages and moving things around so I could have the room to explain the story, and asked him to redraw some pages. He took great offense at this, but the end product in *Giant-Size Avengers #2* I consider to be one of the three or four best stories that I ever wrote. Everything worked on that one and I was really happy with it.

FEATURE: What were the other three or four stories you were most pleased with?

ENGLEHART: I don't know that I'm really carrying them around in my head, but I think "Sise-Neg Genesis" would be one of them, the final chapter of the Batman sequence, the first Shang-Chi story . . .

FEATURE: Did you ever intend to tie Dr. Doom into the Kang/Immortus series?

ENGLEHART: I didn't have any plans for that.

FEATURE: Did you have any concept of what the son or daughter of the Celestial Madonna would be? Kang said that he

or she would be the most important being on Earth and the most powerful being in the universe.

ENGLEHART: I stated either there, or when Willow came back that this kid is a hybrid who would be the coordinator between animal life and plant life, and also between Earth and the stars. When I brought Willow back in *JLA*, in the panel where there's talk about him being the great leader of the Earth in the coming years, Dick Dillin drew him looking like Christ. That wasn't my intent. Mr. Miracle said "I'm the son of God. What can I do about it?" But I'm not looking for another messiah.

If I'm still writing an occasional comic book story in the year 2000, the kid will have grown up by then, and if I'm interested and other people still care, I might eventually get around to saying what this kid is supposed to be. All I know now is that in the story Eclipse is going to publish, she's had her kid. But we don't see him. I don't have a clear conception of exactly what he'll do. I don't want to lock myself in, because if I ever decide to do a story about it, I want to be as fresh as I can.

FEATURE: Speaking of Mr. Miracle, did you have any further plans for his role as the redeemer of Apololips?

ENGLEHART: No. I knew I was going to be at DC for a year. I had contracted to write thirty-six stories during that time, and when the *Mr. Miracle* assignment came along, I knew that I was going to write three *Mr. Miracles*. Many people seem to know that the fourth one by "John Harkness" was actually by me. I saw my function there as basically taking out all the stuff that was wrong with Kirby's conception: the omnipotent Mother Box, the bad dialogue . . .straightening it up, giving it direction: that was my function as an employee of the company. I did the best I could with what I was doing, but I only thought in terms of setting it up for three issues. The night before I left New York, DC said, "We need somebody to write this fourth issue." And so I wrote that entire issue overnight, and didn't want my name on it because I hadn't really had a chance to spend too much time thinking or writing. Also, Larry Hama, who became the new editor on the book, wanted Mr. Miracle to return to Earth and suggested the idea of Mr. Miracle confronting Darkseid, losing and getting sent back to Earth. Since it wasn't my story, and was written to order, I didn't want to put my name on it. It wasn't what I would have done with the character. I had intended for Mr. Miracle to stay on Apokolips and wage an underground war, while at the same time being that strange mix of Jesus Christ and media superstar.

FEATURE: What were your plans for Star-Lord?

ENGLEHART: Star-Lord grew out of my interest in astrology. I wanted to do twelve chapters based on this premise: he would go to the sun and start working his way outward through the cosmos. On Mercury, he would have a story that was consistent with the energy that involves Mercury. On Venus, he would have a love story. On Mars, he would have a war story. On Jupiter, he would have success and renown. On Saturn, he would have restrictions and hardships. It's an interesting way of building a series: you have a different theme each time. Eventually he would get to Pluto and then beyond the galaxy. What he would have done then, I don't know. But he would have risen and advanced. By the time the twelfth chapter came around I would have known what I wanted him to do. Basically the idea was that he was a space god: he did not belong on Earth. But I didn't want to do space opera. He wouldn't have been fighting the Kree across the galaxy or something like that. It would have been an anthology series, basically.

FEATURE: When you left Marvel to go to DC, it was said that you were going to do a character called Zodiac.

ENGLEHART: Jenette Kahn had a friend who was an astrologer and she had the idea of doing an astrological series. It was proposed to me and I said, okay. But then—I was still in the process of working this through— I decided that DC was treating me right and I was treating them right, but I was damned if I was to create anybody else that I wouldn't own. I would do the Justice League, I would do the Batman, but I wouldn't create somebody.

FEATURE: Who are your favorite artists to work with, and why?

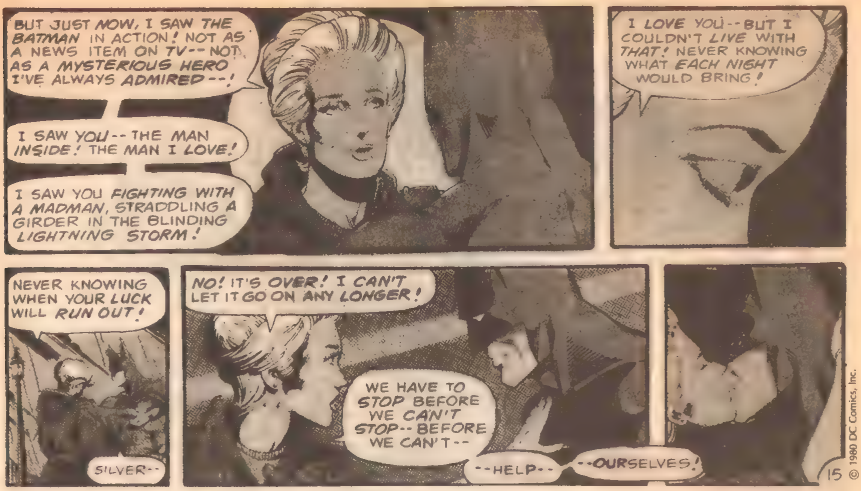
ENGLEHART: Generally what I like in an artist is an ability to draw, of course, but enthusiasm may be the most important point. If the person is interested in what he's doing . . .I'd rather have George Perez with artistic flaws but a lot of interest in doing the Avengers than someone else who can draw like a son-of-a-bitch but is bored out of his mind. Each artist was a special case: each one was different. I thought about what the character was going to look like depending on who's drawing it, and that colored my head, and so I'd come up with stories that would come out of that. I can say that I really like Marshall Rogers because he draws well and we think alike. I really like Frank Brunner's art because he draws well and we thought alike on that strip. One evening every two months we would get together and each one of us would come up with a couple of ideas and we'd put the ideas together. It would evolve over the course of the evening. Sal Buscema is another I like to work with for the reasons I mentioned. It's easier to mention the people I didn't like to work with, but I don't want to get into that. But most everybody I like working with for different reasons.

FEATURE: How would you describe the difference between Brunner's *Dr. Strange* and Colan's *Dr. Strange*?

ENGLEHART: Brunner's was more dead-of-night type of stuff, which is my favorite. Gene's was more ethereal. With Gene I tended to do stories that had more to do with nuance, with facial expressions and subtleties. With Frank, we were more interested in doing the action/adventure. It was more explosive with Brunner, but it was more esoteric with Gene. Also, with Gene, I was the sole plotter. With Frank, we co-plotted.

FEATURE: What other artists have you done co-plotting with?

ENGLEHART: Al Milgrom and I co-plotted *Captain Marvel*. Starlin and I worked together creating *Master of Kung Fu*. Oddly enough, the Batman stuff was all scripted in advance. I didn't even meet Marshall until after the books were out. I didn't meet him until I came back from Europe. Then we found out that we both were in exactly the same place in regard to that character.


BUT JUST NOW, I SAW THE BATMAN IN ACTION! NOT AS A NEWS ITEM ON TV--NOT AS A MYSTERIOUS HERO I'VE ALWAYS ADMIRED--!
I SAW YOU--THE MAN INSIDE! THE MAN I LOVE!
I SAW YOU FIGHTING WITH A MADMAN, STRADDLING A GIRDER IN THE BLINDING LIGHTNING STORM!
I LOVE YOU--BUT I COULDN'T LIVE WITH THAT! NEVER KNOWING WHAT EACH NIGHT WOULD BRING!
NEVER KNOWING WHEN YOUR LUCK WILL RUN OUT!
SILVER--
NO! IT'S OVER! I CAN'T LET IT GO ON ANY LONGER!
WE HAVE TO STOP BEFORE WE CAN'T STOP--BEFORE WE CAN'T--
--HELP--
--OURSELVES!
15
© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

FEATURE: Will you be co-plotting the new stories for Eclipse?

ENGLEHART: No. Those stories were done script in advance. Marshall will take the full scripts and draw them however he feels appropriate. We won't be bound by the full scripts. After I get the artwork back, it may give me another idea for different lines. It's like both worlds with this one. We start off with a full script, but then I'll do a final dialogue. It also frees Marshall up. If he gets an idea and wants to change something, he's not bound by the fact that it's already there. He changed a few things in the *Batman* stories, always for the better. He would expand on something I had. I did not write Silver St. Cloud kissing the Batman goodbye. They did their whole scene and she ran off, but without a kiss. Marshall thought they should kiss and he put it in. And I said, "You're right. They should have." Julie Schwartz gave him a hard time: "How dare you change a writer's stuff?" And I said, "Julie, I don't care. It was better."

FEATURE: Who are the editors you like to work with?

ENGLEHART: Myself [laughter]. I enjoyed working with Julie Schwartz. My impression, which I never discussed with him and don't know if it's true or not—I was writing from California at the time—was that Julie really likes comic books, even to this day. What I was doing may not have been what he would have chosen to do, but he recognized the fact that I liked it and was putting energy into it, and he was willing to let me run with it.

Roy Thomas was kind of an up-and-down case. Roy was intelligent and he knew comics, but he wasn't always fair and he was also interested in aggrandizing himself at others' expense, if need be. When Roy Thomas left *The Avengers*, so did John Buscema and Tom Palmer. Roy got everybody who was good and the rest of us had to make do with what was left over. He also did a couple of things to me: he took books away. Specifically, with *The Avengers* and *The Hulk*, when I started to get as popular or more popular than he had been, he used his editorial power to fuck me over. I proposed a *Giant-Size Avengers* for months and one day I got a call from Roy saying, "We're doing it and I'm writing it." When I began to get really popular on *The Hulk* and people began to say, "Hey, this is better than Roy's," I got a call saying, "I'm the editor. I think I'll take *The Hulk* back." He kept it for one issue and gave it to somebody else. Still, he was better at being an editor than a lot of these guys who came in as illiterate high school people who wanted to work for Marvel Comics, and didn't have any clear conception of how to be editors. I'm not talking about the guys who actually held the title: Len was okay to work with; Marv was okay to work with. They were not as intense about it as Roy had been, but it was mostly the people who were proofreading the books who usually caused problems. I've had no problems with Jack Harris until this thing came down. He's enthusiastic and we work well together. There are a couple of people in the entire industry who I'd say are actual card-carrying assholes, but most people were either good, or at least okay.

FEATURE: Do you think you'll be working for *Epic*?

ENGLEHART: It's possible. My main thrust is novels, but I know that the way this thing works, I'll have free months now and then. I would prefer to work for a place that didn't ask me to sign a work-made-for-hire contract. If I had to go to a place where you had to sign a contract, I would prefer the deal you get for *Epic* to the deal you get for regular Marvel comics. Plus, I like Archie Goodwin and always have. So it's possible that I may do something for *Epic*, more out of friendship than out of anything else. But the stuff that Eclipse is doing is the best deal in comics and that's where I'll take my energies first.

FEATURE: Do you have any specific plans for future novels, or don't you want to discuss them while they're still in the planning stages?

ENGLEHART: I don't want to discuss what the plans are, but I do have plans. My second novel is very clear in my head, and while I'm here in New York, I'm getting that proposal together to send to the editors.

FEATURE: It's been rumored that Stan was angry at DC for creating Power Girl while Marvel had Power Man, and so Wonder Man was brought back for the sole reason that he had a name like Wonder Woman.

ENGLEHART: That's exactly right. Wonder Man was created in *Avengers* #9 and DC had objected loudly. Stan said, "Okay, I won't do this character any more." But then DC created Power Girl, and Stan said, "Let's do it." It was just petty in-

ter-company jealousies. They just told me to bring the character back, but that was just when I was leaving the series so I didn't have much to do with it.

FEATURE: Here comes the big, final question which winds it all up: what is the potential for the comics medium, as you see it?

ENGLEHART: I think the potential is unlimited. It's a medium which can do what no other medium can do: the marriage of words and pictures. There should be no limits to that. Stan used to say that some day this was going to be an artform. When I went to see *Star Wars*, I came out and said, "Yeah. That was it." The ultimate potential of comics was up there on the screen. It was never achieved at Marvel Comics, or achieved only briefly. There's no reason why that has to be; it's just that's the way the companies are run. On the one hand, the continuing companies want to try to make it a business. It has to be a business. But they've gone too far. They've tried to fit everybody into a mold; they've killed the creative impetus; they've gotten rid of anybody who might be too bizarre for their standardized tastes. It's also so caught up in merchandising that you can't change anything because it might screw up some merchandising deal. "You can't do this, you can't do that." You can't do a hundred other things that we used to be able to do.

Generally, when people get unleashed, they don't do anything that's so much better than what they've done before because they haven't been thinking in those terms. In comics, since you're subsisting day to day, you don't carry around concepts in your head. You've generally used it last month in *Freddy the Frog* #27. How many concepts do you have? If you're doing comics you've got to keep coming up with something new,or you used to have to.

But given the chance to take the time to revamp stuff, to revamp one's head, to get out of comics, let your batteries recharge, live in a different life experience . . .there's no reason why it can't be a fantastic medium. To tie it up once more, look at the stuff that Eclipse is proposing: getting all the people who have been good in the last ten years and giving them the chance to use that talent. One, these people are good. Two, most of them have had the chance to get out of comics for a while to get different life experiences and different ideas. So, at the moment I would have to say that the Eclipse stuff looks to be at least where the future can be found. Whether it will be found will depend on how Eclipse plays it, and how the creators play it. It's like DC again: I can't tell you that Eclipse will be the great thing of the future. But, Eclipse is not only talking a good game, they're playing a good game so far. They're treating people right and they're giving them what they should have. If that continues, that will be the place where the people who've got something to offer will want to be. We were discussing this before the interview started: I think the companies, as presently constituted, are dying. I think DC will die first because they've never delivered on their promises. To me they're just comatose, waiting to die. And I believed this even before the trip came down with me and Levitz. I look at their books and I don't see any energy at all. But I can deliver energy when I come around and if they treat me right, I'll treat them right. Marvel still has more energy, but Marvel, to me, is like a scorpion that's stinging itself to death. You get nothing but bitterness and black bile out of the company. There are still a number of people at Marvel whom I like personally, so I don't want to paint them all with the same brush. But in general, people keep leaving Marvel under the worst possible circumstances. That's not healthy. That's not the mark of a company that's doing well. I would tend to think that DC will go out of business in the next couple of years and Marvel, if it doesn't change its ways—which it always has the potential to do because it's still more volatile—will follow them because as comics assume less and less of a role in people's lives overall, they'll sort of fade away like pulp novels and full animation.

But the medium exists, the people who can do it well exist. In Europe it's successful and accepted.

FEATURE: When you say that *Star Wars* is the ultimate, do you mean that you see comics as basically being devoted to adventure stories?

ENGLEHART: It doesn't have to be. I happen to prefer that stuff. I happen to like heroic fantasy in any format. It doesn't have to be costumed heroes. The stuff that I write will always have a strong hero and a touch of fantasy. I'm probably not going to write love story comics, or funny animals. But again, there's no reason why people who can do it shouldn't do it. So at the moment I think we're at the tail end of the Marvel Age of Comics. I don't think Marvel's in immediate danger, but I think they're headed towards extinction the way they're being operated from on top. And a lot of people, I think, will go down with the ship and be surprised when it goes. They've devoted their lives to this and all of a sudden what are they going to do? But I don't see a potential for growth there. I don't see new energy and new ideas. I'd say Eclipse is where the potential lies. ●

NEXT ISSUE:

The "Upstart" Interview - JIM STARLIN, HOWARD CHAYKIN, WALT SIMONSON

NMI reveals new publishing plans in an exclusive report!

Plus a special feature on European comics!

STYX COMIC SERVICE

Comic Books
Science Fiction
Collectors Items

P.O. BOX 3781 STATION B WINNIPEG, MANITOBA R2W 3R6 PHONE (204) 586-7930

SAVE MONEY - RIGHT NOW!

ASK!

—DO THE STORES IN YOUR AREA CARRY A COMPLETE LINE OF COMICS AND MAGAZINES?

—DO THE STORES IN YOUR AREA CARRY FANZINES, FOREIGN, AND RELATED COLLECTORS' ITEMS?

—IS IT EASY TO GET TO THE STORE?

—IS IT CONVENIENT FOR YOU TO SPEND YOUR TIME, ENERGY, AND MONEY IN TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST RELEASES?

—CAN YOU NOT FIND THE MINT COPIES OF ITEMS YOU DESIRE?

—IS YOUR CURRENT COMIC SERVICE GIVING YOU THE WIDEST SELECTION OF MATERIALS AND THE BEST SELECTION OF DELIVERY SCHEDULES?

—HAVE YOU SPENT A FORTUNE LOOKING FOR THOSE ELUSIVE KEY'S OR MISSING?

—ARE YOU EVER FRUSTRATED WHILE TRYING TO GET PERSONAL ATTENTION FROM YOUR PRESENT SERVICE?

—WOULD YOU LIKE TO ESTABLISH A DEALERSHIP, OR IF YOU ARE A DEALER NOW, ARE YOU GETTING THE BEST DEAL?

WE THINK WE KNOW YOUR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS, AND OUR SERVICE IS DESIGNED TO SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS! AND, IN KEEPING WITH OUR BEING THE LOWEST-RUNNING AND MOST PROGRESSIVE COMIC SERVICE, WE'VE INTRODUCED SOME NEW INNOVATIONS, WHICH AREN'T JUST PEOPLE....THEY'RE FACT! YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF, AND SEND YOUR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION TODAY!

THE NEW WAY!

THIS IS IT!

CENTRAL WSA SERVICE NO. 328

THE SYSTEM 1.) SELECTION NO ONE offers you the selection of stuff on our publications list. And if you don't see it there, you can add it in. We'll do our best to get it for you! (Even if it's something like GOOD HOUSE KEEPING!)

2.) SHIPPING: YOU select the method you wish us to ship your books by.

3.) FREQUENCY NO ONE offers you such a large choice of how often the books are shipped.

4.) PACKING We have used specially designed boxes to ship books for the past six years. This method has gotten rave reviews from hundreds of customers all over the world! In addition, your books are wrapped in PLASTIC, and are padded securely with newspaper, to ensure that they arrive IN MINT CONDITION! We even give each box its own MAIL BAG!

5.) THE ACCOUNT Each member deposits funds into his or her own numbered account. As your sales are collected and shipped, we will send you a CLEAR, CONCISE invoice, listing all materials, the total cost, and any other charges. You will also receive a CLEAR STATEMENT listing all deposits and giving you your exact balance. In addition, a COPY of your invoice is kept in our records, and a THIRD COPY is included with your shipment in a packing slip so that you can verify the contents of the box! THIS ENSURES THAT THERE WILL BE NO ERRORS!

6.) THE SORTING SYSTEM We operate on a 'standing order' system. You can make additions or deletions to your order at any time, simply by writing to us. We will implement these changes as quickly as possible.

7.) THE COMPUTER. YES! You read this correctly! WE ARE OBTAINING A COMPUTER TO HELP US WITH THE SORTING, BILLING, AND ACCOUNTS. JUST ANOTHER WAY IN WHICH WE ARE WORKING TO IMPROVE SERVICE AND CUT DOWN ON MISTAKES!

8.) OK, WHAT DOES ALL THIS COST? There are 3 components of cost:

1.) NO ONE BUT NO ONE OFFERS

20% DISCOUNT ACROSS THE BOARD! Those are 3 important words - were! Some services offer 10% on "most" items. Some even offer 20% on "most" items. But it's those items that DON'T get discounted that wind up costing you! With us, EVERYTHING gets 20% off. No gimmicks, no confusion, and best of all, SAVINGS TO YOU! (Yes, it's our new cost system, and we're PROUD TO BE ABLE TO OFFER IT!)

2.) We charge you exactly the postage used to ship your materials. No more, and no less. Since YOU decide the method of shipment, YOU in effect decide the shipping cost! And we use SPECIAL MAIL (our regular mailing method), which is FAST, DEPENDABLE, and best of all, CHEAPER than any other comparable method!

3.) There is a service charge of $1.00 for each shipment. This helps cover the costs of labor, accounting, and the packaging materials which we use to prepare your order. No one can charge less (and some people try) and STILL MAINTAIN PERSONAL ATTENTION TO YOUR ORDER!

FOLLOW THESE EASY STEPS TO JOIN NOW: (NOTE. You will receive IMMEDIATE confirmation of your account. If you do not wish to cut this magazine, use a separate sheet of paper to make your list!)

1.) Use the standard publications list below to check off the titles you take regularly. If you buy more than one copy of any titles, put the number of copies of each issue you normally get into the space next to it on the sheet. THERE IS NO MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM NUMBER OF TITLES, AND NO MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM NUMBER OF COPIES! (We do use thousand, we will get them for you just the same.

2.) Enter name and address information on the sheet. Select your SHIPPING FREQUENCY and mailing method.

3.) Estimate your cost for one month's worth of service, and enclose a deposit to cover TWO month's (to give you a bit of leeway.) Make check or money order out to "STYX COMIC SERVICES".

Place your completed listing and payment in an envelope, and send it to: STYX COMIC SERVICE, P.O. BOX 3781, STATION B, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA; R2W 3R6

DEALERS

45% OFF! (U.S. FUNDS)

***WE OFFER A STARTING DISCOUNT OF 45% UNBELIEVABLE.....

***FOREIGN WIDE ——combination DROPSHIPPING FROM THE PRINTERS and warehouses!

***NO MINIMUMS! ***GUARANTEED ADVANCE DELIVERY!

***CANADIAN AND FOREIGN DEALERS ESPECIALLY WELCOME!

WRITE FOR FULL DETAILS TODAY!

STYX COMIC SERVICE PUBLICATIONS LIST, Fall 1979 — Page One

Section 1: DC and MARVEL

ANNUALS: (Note: We automatically supply only those annuals for titles you regularly get, and in proper quantities. To make sure you receive ALL annuals, even for titles you don't normally receive, mark the spaces indicated.)
___ DC ANNUALS (all titles)
___ MARVEL ANNUALS (all titles)

FIRST ISSUES: (To ensure that you do not miss any first issues, mark the appropriate spaces below. All titles, giants, etc. will be supplied. You may then notify us of which new titles you wish to continue.)
___ DC FIRST ISSUES (all titles, etc.)
___ MARVEL FIRST ISSUES (all, etc.)

___ ACTION COMICS
___ ADVENTURE COMICS
___ ALL OUT WAR
___ AMAZING ADVENTURES (X-MEN)
___ ANTHOLOGIZED TALES (SUPERMAN)
___ ATHENIANS
___ BATMAN
___ BATTLESTAR GALACTICA
___ BRAVE AND BOLD
___ CAPT. AMERICA
___ CONAN
___ DAREDEVIL
___ DAZZLER (MARVEL)*****
___ DC ___ COMICS (all titles)
___ ____ ISSUE OF DC DIGEST only
___ ____ THE BATMAN TALES only
___ other:
___ DC PRESENTS
___ DC SPECIAL SERIES (all titles)
___ DEFENDERS
___ INCREDIBLE HULK
___ DR. STRANGE
___ FANTASTIC FOUR
___ FANTASY MASTERPIECES (SILVER SURFER)
___ FLASH
___ GHOST RIDER
___ GHOSTS
___ GI COMBAT
___ GREEN LANTERN
___ HOUSE OF MYSTERY
___ HULK
___ IRON MAN
___ JONAH HEX
___ JUSTICE LEAGUE
___ KING CONAN
___ LEGEND OF THE BATMAN*****
___ LEGION OF SUPER HEROES*****
___ MACHINE MAN
___ MAN-THING
___ MARVEL FAN'N'GAMES
___ MARVEL PREMIERE
___ MARVEL SPOTLIGHT (CAPT. MARVEL)
___ MARVEL SUPER ACTION
___ MARVEL SUPER HEROES
___ MARVEL TALES
___ MARVEL TEAM-UP
___ MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE
___ MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS
___ MASTER OF KUNG FU
___ MEN OF WAR
___ MICRONAUTS
___ POWERMAN/IRON FIST
___ RCM, SPACEKNIGHT
___ RAVAGE 2099--HULK*****
___ SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE
___ SGT. FURY
___ SGT. ROCK
___ SHOGUN WARRIORS
___ SPECTACULAR SPIDERMAN
___ SPIDERMAN
___ SPIDERWOMAN
___ SPIRIT SUPER STORIES
___ STAR TREK*****
___ STAR WARS
___ SUBMARINEER*****
___ SUPER FRIENDS
___ SUPERBOY (NEW ADVS. OF...)
___ SUPERBOY SPECTACULAR (one-shot)
___ SUPERMAN
___ SUPERMAN FAMILY
___ SUPERVILLAIN TEAM-UP
___ SWAMP THING*****
___ SWAMP THING SAGA (Original)
___ THOR
___ THOR: THE MIGHTY*****
___ TIME WARP
___ UNEXPECTED
___ UNKNOWN SOLDIER
___ UNTOLD TALES OF THE LEGION
___ WARLORD
___ WEIRD WAR
___ WEIRD WESTERN ___ WELCOMBACK*****
___ WHAT IF?
___ WONDER WOMAN
___ "WORLD'S" FINEST
___ X-MEN

Section 2: Other Publishers
(Note: Please check mark by desired group. Use separate paper to list titles and quantities.)
___ ARCHIE ___ ARCHIE'S JUGGHEAD
___ BARNEY (FISHER KING, etc.)

Section 3: Gold Key
___ GOLD KEY FIRST ISSUES (all titles, etc.)
___ BATTLE OF THE PLANETS
___ BEAGLE BOYS/SCROOGE
___ BOZO BEEP BOP/TWEEP
___ BUCKLE BAILEY
___ BLACK HOLE (DISNEY)*****
___ BUCK ROGERS*****
___ BUCK ROGERS
___ BULLWINKLE
___ CHIP'N'DALE
___ DAFFY DUCK
___ DAISY AND DONALD
___ DONALD DUCK
___ DR. SPACEKNIGHT
___ FLASH GORDON*****
___ GRIMM'S GHOST STORIES
___ HAPPY DAYS
___ HUEY, DEWEY, LOUIE
___ LITTLE LULU
___ LOONEY TUNES
___ MICKEY MOUSE
___ NEW ADVENTURES (MICHTY MOUSE)
___ PINK PANTHER
___ POPEYE
___ POREY PIG
___ RIPLEY'S
___ SAVAGE COOP
___ TOM AND JERRY
___ TUNES
___ TWEETY & SYLVESTER
___ TWILIGHT ZONE
___ UNCLE SCROOGE
___ UNDERDOG
___ W.D. COMICS & STORIES
___ W.D. SHOWCASE
___ WINNIE THE POOH
___ WOODY WOODPECKER
___ YOGI BEAR

Section 4: Charlton
___ FIRST ISSUES (all, etc
___ ATTACK ___ BULLY 2.KID
___ FIGHTIN' ARMY
___ FIGHTIN' MARINES
___ GHOST MANOR
___ GHOSTLY HAUNTS
___ GHOSTLY TALES
___ GUNFIGHTERS
___ HAUNTED ___ I LOVE YOU
___ MANY GHOSTS IR. CRAVES
___ MONSTER HUNTERS
___ OUTLAWS OF WEST
___ SECRET ISLE ___ WAR
___ SECRET ROMANCE

STYX COMIC SERVICE PUBLICATIONS LIST Fall 1979 — PAGE Two

Section 5: MAGAZINES & PERIODICALS

___ APTA
___ AMAZING STORIES
___ ANALOG
___ ANIMENORE*****
___ ARCHIE DIGEST SERIES (all titles)
___ ARCHIE DIGESTS (only some---list specific titles separately.)
___ ARCHIE Magazine*****
___ CAPTAIN CANUCK*****
___ CHEERIO'S THE ARROW*****
___ CINEMAGIC (from Starlog)
___ CIRCUS
___ CLUB INTERNATIONAL
___ COLLECTORS' DREAM
___ COMIC READER*****
___ COMICS JOURNAL*****
___ CRACKED ___ CRACKED SPECIALS
___ CRAZY
___ CREEM
___ CREEPY
___ DENNIS THE MENACE DIGEST SERIES
___ DESTINIES (from Ace Books)*****
___ DRAGON
___ ELFQUEST*****
___ EPIC ILLUSTRATED (from Marvel)
___ FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND
___ FANGORIA (from Starlog)*****
___ FANTASTIC FILMS
___ FANTASTIC S-F
___ FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION
___ FIRST KINGDOM*****
___ FUNNYWORLD
___ FUTURE LIFE
___ GALAXY
___ GALLERY ___ GALLERY SPECIALS
___ HEAVY METAL
___ HEAVY METAL SPECIAL EDITIONS
___ KIT PARAGEN
___ HOWARD THE DUCK*****
___ ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINE
___ ISAAC ASIMOV'S SF ADVENTURE MAGAZINE
___ MAGICIAN
___ MAD MAGAZINE ___ MAD SPECIALS
___ MARVEL COMICS (BACK ISSUES
___ MARVEL PREVIEW
___ MARVEL SUPER SPECIALS
___ MAYFAIR
___ MEDIASCENE
___ MEN ONLY
___ NATIONAL LAMPOON
___ NATIONAL LAMPOON SPECIALS
___ 1984 MAGAZINE (Warren)
___ OMNI ___ OMNI SPECIALS
___ OUI ___ OUI SPECIALS
___ PENTHOUSE ___ PENTHOUSE SPECIALS
___ PENTHOUSE POSTER

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ALL INFORMATION)

1.) Specify shipping frequency: ___WEEKLY ___SEMI-MONTHLY ___MONTHLY

2.) Specify shipping method: ___REGULAR MAIL ___INSURED PARCEL POST (expensive!) ___AIRMAIL (expensive!)

NAME:
STREET ADDRESS:
CITY:
STATE OR PROVINCE:
POSTAL OR ZIP CODE:
PHONE (required) AREA CODE: NUMBER:

___ PLAYBOY
___ PLAYBOY SPECIALS
___ QUESTAR
___ RAMPAGING HULK
___ RICHIE RICH DIGEST SERIES (all, only some (specify titles)
___ ROCKET'S BLAST
___ ROLLING STONE
___ THE ROOK (Warren)*****
___ SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN
___ SIGH
___ SPIRIT (Richen Sink)*****
___ STAR REACH*****
___ STARLOG
___ STARLOG PHOTO GUIDEBOOKS
___ STARLOG SPECIALS
___ TOMB OF DRACULA*****
___ VAMPIRELLA
___ VIMPORELLA*****
___ WARSON FRIENDS*****
___ WARSON ONE-SHOTS

NOTE:
Please use a separate sheet of paper to list additions, omissions, special instructions, etc.
You may specify the starting issues for each title.

Section 6: TERRIBLES
___ DC TREASURY EDITIONS (all titles)
___ DC's (only characters you collect)
___ MARVEL TREASURIES (all titles)
___ MARVELs (only characters you collect)

Section 7: POCKETBOOKS
___ DC POCKETBOOKS (all titles)
___ DC's (only characters you collect.)
___ MARVEL POCKETBOOKS (all titles)
___ MARVEL's (only comic reprints)
___ MARVEL's (only written novels)
___ MARVEL's (only characters you collect.)

THE SILVER AGE OF COMICS PART IV

by Murray R. Ward

1963.

At the beginning of the decade, comics had finally raised their price for the first time in their history, from 10¢ to 12¢ (including a miscue on Dell's part which caused them to rise to 15¢, then sink back to 12¢ like the others). Annuals and giant Specials were 72 pages at Marvel, 64 pages at Harvey, and 80 pages everywhere else, and they all cost a quarter, except Harvey's which for some unaccountable reason were 35¢.

Back issues were most readily available at the various local second-hand book and magazine stores, where they could be had for a uniform half-price, or traded, two of yours for one of theirs. And back in the days when every good American boy went to the barbershop every few weeks, comics could be traded one for one. Some issues were harder to find than others, but no one ever dreamed of charging more for the rarer numbers, even if the proprietors had had any idea of which issues those were. Indeed, the predominance of the financial value of comics was basically unheard of in the early 1960s. The infiltration of speculators and investors were still a few years away, even if dealers such as Rogofsky and Bell paved the way back then.

And so, at a dime and two pennies a throw, the fun continued. In the third team-up of the two Scarlet Speedsters in *Flash* #137, the Justice Society of America returned in a cameo appearance, and from there it was only a matter of not-unexpected fan cheering, pleading and cajoling until the former occupants of *All-Star Comics* made their full fighting debut in the 1960s, battling side-by-side with their counterparts in the Justice League of America. *Justice League* #21-22, featuring "Crisis on Earth-One" and "Crisis on Earth-Two," pitted the two teams against a grouping of supervillains culled from both parallel earths, and started a new comics tradition.

In addition to reviving the full Justice Society, these two issues also marked only the second continued story to appear in *JLA*, or in any of the regular superhero titles. It proved popular with the readers and paved the way for many continued epics to come. Also, the 1940s stars proved so popular that they were to return to join forces with the Justice League in a two-part adventure occupying the summer issues of that title every year to this date. Even the "Crisis" title has become a trademark of the series.

More and more, the Schwartz titles formed a separate, yet interwoven mythos of their own, as did Mort Weisinger's group of Superman-related titles, and to a lesser extent, Jack Schiff's Batman grouping. The entire "DC Universe" (a term whose usage was still far in the future) was tied together rather loosely by the team-up and group books. Superman and Batman met every issue in *World's Finest* and the two of them joined the Schwartz heroes and others in every issue of *Justice League*. Those few supercharacters not controlled by the above three editors were plainly accepted by the readers as living and adventuring in the same homogeneous world.

The only indication that the whole process of revival and rebirth might be losing its initial momentum was in the trial-balloon books. After the Metal Men were given their own title, *Showcase* began to concentrate on elevating to star status not the former heroes of the Golden Age, but characters who had until recently been back-up features in the Superman family of titles. Actually, Schwartz's original idea *could* only be taken so far, since far from all of the JSA members had possessed their own books even in the 1940s and it was unreasonable to assume that they could all shine in the 1960s. Flash and Green Lantern had already made it; the Atom, himself a mere back-up in *All-American*, had turned the trick with some revamping of his powers; but Hawkman, who had alternated as the cover feature of *Flash Comics*, was a bit slower leaving the starting gate. *Showcase* now tried to do for others what it had done for Aquaman, but Tommy Tomorrow, even with an altered epoch and origin, failed to make the grade even after two sets of try-outs, and a second outing of Cave Carson (who had formerly appeared in *Brave and the Bold*) did no better.

After almost a year of the highly experimental *Strange Sports Stories* anthology series, *Brave and the Bold* changed from a try-out title to what was then a new concept: the teaming of two different DC heroes in a one-time-only story in each issue. This then new concept began with such truly odd combinations as Green Arrow and J'Onn J'Onzz, and Aquaman and Hawkman. Only once more in its history would *Brave and the Bold* again introduce a new character, when perennial *Brave and the Bold* scripter Bob Haney created Metamorpho, the Element Man in late 1964. It would take DC years longer to realize it, but the time of the trial-balloon book was drawing to a close. *Showcase* would introduce many more series that would graduate to separate magazines, but no superheroes who would last more than a dozen issues on their own, excepting the mystery-oriented Phantom Stranger and the Teen Titans, whose try-outs were split between *Showcase* and *Brave and the Bold*.

While DC consolidated their gains and continued their proven formula, Marvel lived up to its self-proclaimed title as "the House of Ideas" by continued experimentation and expansion. *The Fantastic Four* and *Spider-Man* became the uncontested flagships of their line and for a long while the only titles with their own letters pages, which also printed comments on the other Marvel books.

Marvel's expansion came relatively quickly, with Thor firmly placed in *Journey into Mystery*, Ant-Man in *Tales to Astonish*, Iron Man in *Tales of Suspense* and Lee and Ditko's mysterious

© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

Spider-Man

by Eddie Cline

While the Fantastic Four established the "Marvel style" of action oriented, glib talking superheroes, it wasn't until the final issue of *Amazine Adult Fantasy* (#15) that the archetypal Marvel character was introduced: Spider-Man.

High school student Peter Parker was a bookworm. He was also underweight, shy, a "wallflower," representing every insecurity trait many of the comics readers could identify with. He was a social anomaly; a loser. The girls made fun of him, the guys ridiculed him and his teachers praised him for his dedication to his schoolwork. In the origin story of Spider-Man, Peter Parker chooses to go to a science presentation over hanging out with his peers. Oddly enough, the science experiment was responsible for the emergence, after years of adjustment, of Peter Parker into the mainstream of his peer structure. Peter Parker was bit, at the experiment, by a radioactive spider and that night was born the amazing Spider-Man, endowed with the proportionate strength of a spider.

But even as the powerful Spider-Man, Peter Parker did not at first meet with great success. In fact, his irresponsibility in not stopping a thief was to shape the rest of his life. The thief, it turned out, later burglarized his aunt and uncle's house and killed his uncle Ben. If Parker, as Spider-Man, had stopped the burglar when he should have, his uncle (and surrogate father) would have remained alive.

BUT ALAS, OTHER TEEN-AGERS CAN SOMETIMES, UNWITTINGLY, BE SO VERY CRUEL TO A SHY YOUNG MAN...
SALLY, I, EH, WAS WONDERING IF YOU'RE BUSY TONIGHT...?
PETER, FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME, YOU'RE JUST NOT MY TYPE...

© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

Yet this is the stuff of which great heroes are made: an act of irresponsibility which causes a guilt-ridden existence bent on compensating for the one mistake he has made. And so the Spider-Man dedicated his life to preventing crime, and later, saving the world.

The psychological (and even Freudian) undertones to the *Spider-Man* strip are overbearing. It is to Stan Lee and Steve Ditko's credit that they didn't allow these undertones to dominate the strip. The guilt was there, just enough, but never so much as to make the strip pedantic.

Peter Parker, to conceal his identity as Spider-Man, remained a loser; while Spider-Man became the hero of some, and thanks to newspaper publisher J. Jonah Jameson, the villain of many others. Which side of the law was Spider-Man on was the question of the day. While Spider-Man's actions were certainly heroic, Jameson's newspaper tirades denouncing the new supercharacter were enough to place doubt to Spider-Man's intentions. That Jameson's constant barrages could influence the public to such an extent, while other newspapers, including the rival Daily Gobe, almost canonized

Doctor Strange the new back-up along with the Human Torch in *Strange Tales*.

Steve Ditko also performed one of his greatest and least heralded services to Marvel Comics when he devised the idea for their new corner cover trademark, a representation of the book's main character(s) in a little box, underscored by the Marvel name and price. This symbol also appeared on the company's three western titles: *Kid Colt, Outlaw, Two-Gun Kid* and *Rawhide Kid*, and on their four "teen-age soap opera" books which would fluctuate over the years between Archie-style humor and romance comics moral tales: *Millie the Model, Modeling with Millie, Patsy Walker* and *Patsy and Hedy*. These books, too, especially the westerns, began to take on attributes of the pseudo-realistic, glib-talking, fast action Marvel style typified by Lee's writing on most stories and art by Kirby whenever possible (and by Don Heck and Dick Ayers when not).

The monster books were gone now for the most part, with the superhero lead features assuming most of their pages. The superheroes were apparently the wave of the future, if only the near future, so Lee and publisher Martin Goodman concentrated their efforts on expanding their hero line to take a visible portion of the comics market away from the top-selling DC, any one of whose many editors were responsible for as many titles as constituted Marvel's entire line. Since Lee, as editor/art director/chief (and almost only) writer, was capable of a prolificacy comparable to sf author Isaac Asimov's, and since artist and uncredited co-creator of many of the characters, Jack Kirby's quality of work lessened only imperceptibly when he worked at a break-neck pace on several books a month, Marvel was in a unique position to increase their output without decreasing their profits and increasing their paperwork by hiring new staff members who might have to be quickly dismissed if the hero boom fell through. Not counting the romances and westerns, Marvel had six main titles. Lee seems to have decided that ten was the number to shoot for, and considering the limitations under which he was forced to operate, he and Kirby created the necessary four new books full-blown at a very rapid clip.

First came *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos*, Marvel's entry into the only then current comics genre in which they had been totally unrepresented: war comics. Curiously, very few readers who followed DC's long standing war books, *Our Army at War* (with the immortal Sgt. Rock), *G.I. Combat, Our Fighting Forces* and the

© 1980 Marvel Comics Group

Spider-Man, either says a lot for Jameson's power, the gullibility of the Marvel world public, or Stan Lee's personal belief in the power of the media. Take your choice. I personally could never buy one newspaper influencing the public to such a degree.

And yet it worked in the context of the series. It was a new twist on the superhero formula to have the hero's motivations questioned by the public which should have adored him. Spider-Man spent as much time defending himself from the police and bystanders as he did battling the likes of the Vulture, Doctor Octopus and the Sandman. Peter Parker, whether as the meek high school student or as the all-powerful Spider-Man, simply could not win.

Lee's characterization of Parker and Spider-Man began what would later become Marvel formula, but at the time it was innovative and exciting. Parker was the everyman. He would catch cold, have trouble getting dates, and to complicate matters, felt an overwhelming responsibility towards taking care of his sickly Aunt May. (After all, he was indirectly responsible for her husband's death.)

Equally inherent to the series' success was Steve Ditko's art. While Kirby's meek characters (Don Blake, for example) still had a raw power to them, Ditko's Peter Parker was weakness personified. A not-so-strong wind would have bowled him over. His Spider-Man, again contrasting the style to Kirby's, was not a muscle-laden superhuman: he was lithe and agile. He was a human with spider-like abilities. Spider-Man, under Ditko's pencil and pen, established a style and flair unkown to comics at the time, a style abandoned when John Romita took over the series, and regained only when Gil Kane pencilled some issues years later.

Ditko's world was peopled by (strange but) normally proportioned characters. No character ripped off their shirt to reveal miles of muscles: the Vulture was a sickly old buzzard, Doctor Octopus was a portly scientist, the Lizard slithered through the Florida swamps, football star Flash Thompson was muscular but not ridiculously so, Betty Brant was plain and not excessively pretty, crook Nick "Lucky" Lewis was a well-built tough guy.... Ditko's world was stylistic, to be sure, but it was one based in the real world.

Today, Spider-Man is the most popular character in comics, and a far cry from the original Ditko/Lee version. Today Peter Parker is more muscular and dynamic, he gets the girls, he's accepted by his peers and he's not the same character he was back in 1963. Some say better, and some say he's lost some of his charm. Regardless, Spider-Man is the one character of whom it is fair to say has changed the face of comics more than any other in the past twenty years.

rest, or the few Charlton war titles, were the same people who picked up on *Fury*. The Howlers, as they were known, were an undisciplined rag-tag group composed of every nationality among the Allies of World War II. In this, they bore a resemblance to Doc Savage's "Fabulous Five," each member having a special skill and an easily recognizable speech pattern, constantly joking and bickering among themselves. War comics fans weren't the main *Sgt. Fury* readers, superhero fans were. Fury and his brood were a Nazi-battling version of the Fantastic Four sans superpowers, and the early issues made sure the fans knew it with cover blurbs proclaiming the book to be "in the sensational Fantastic Four style," and so it was. One fan christened the Howlers as "the war mag for people who *hate* war mags," and the name stuck.

DC's creation of the Justice League had, willy-nilly, given Marvel the impetus to create their own team book, *The Fantastic Four*. But the FF were more like the Challengers than the JLA, a team of heroes sharing a common origin, not a banding together of previously established individual champions of justice. Lee's next creation copied the Justice League/Justice Society formula far more closely when extant Marvel heroes Thor, Iron Man, Ant-Man and his newly-acquired female partner the Wasp, and (surprise, surprise) the gone-but-not-forgotten Hulk stumbled into common cause and decided to form the Avengers. (Noticeably absent was Spider-Man, who's appeal as a lone-wolf was by now obvious.) The Avengers, like the FF and the Howlers, joked and argued, and with good reason. While the DC heroes of the JLA roll call shared in common many aims, goals, and character traits, any similarities between a Norse god, a playboy inventor, a bashful biochemist, a zany heiress, and a manic monster were purely superficial. Most of the Avengers' early battles seemed to revolve around a continuing struggle just to keep the team together. After two episodes, the Hulk quit in disgust and even turned against his former partners as one of the villains of their third issue. Only with the addition of yet another 1940s survivor, Captain America, the following year, did the Avengers really cement their alliance.

Released simultaneously with *Avengers #1* was the first issue of another new Marvel team, which had some similarities with the FF. In fact, the X-Men were closer to the FF than were the Avengers, for they were an all-new group of characters with common goals, and a common origin (of sorts).

Magnus Robot Fighter

by Gary Brown

The plotline is as old as the concept of servants. Sooner or later the "masters" will depend too much on them and . . .BINGO . . .revolution. Then the masters will be the slaves.

When the robot was introduced to science fiction, one of the first stories dealt with men being conquered by his mechanical servants, having becoming too dependant on their programmed obedience.

Still, it was an exciting idea and could be spun off in a number of different directions. One of these was the Gold Key (Western Publishing) comic book *Magnus, Robot Fighter*, which first appeared on the stands in early 1963.

The scene was the year 4000 and North Am was a city which took up the entire North American continent. The robots controlled everything. They told humans what to do and when to do it. They made rules, arrests and programmed the city. Most humans were fat and lazy and sat around watching their video tape recorders all day. Life was easy, but not free. Freedom was restricted by computers.

The book begins with the arrival of Magnus and his teacher, a robot by the "name" of 1A. Magnus was trained almost from birth by 1A in the wastes of Antarctica. The purpose to was allow the humans to regain their once noble stature and rightful dominance of their own lives.

Time had come for Magnus, now a young man of 25 or so, to become the hero of North Am and strike back at the robots, evil plotters and lazy humans. The first issue was introductory, in that it showed Magnus' fighting and robot smashing ability. It also showed he had a long way to go.

The first contact he made was with the beautiful Leeja Clane, an independent thinker who would have nothing to do with robots. She also spent most of her time cruising over the speed limit in her air car.

Magnus saved her from a traffic ticket (honest) and they teamed up both to liberate North Am and to engage in other obvious after hours activities.

Leeja's father was a Senator in the North Am Council, a rather powerless group of blustery old men.

Magnus' extraordinary ability was to smash steel (robots) with his bare hands. He tore their legs and heads off and karate chopped them until they squawked and died . . .er . . .were deprogrammed. Most of the villains he met over the years were human with robot sidekicks or armies. The more liberated North Am became, the more human bad guys popped up. One began to wonder if freedom wasn't going too far.

The most frequent and best villain in the series was a fellow by the name of Xyrkol. He was a great villain, as comic book villains go, with a tall crew cut, a beard and long moustache. Most of his encounters with Magnus were of the brainstorming kind. He only resorted in hand-to-hand combat when the game was played and he was on the losing end.

Magnus had its share of giant robots, mini-robs, undersea robots, and the wonders of a futuristic society. To be frank, the series explored a wide variety of potential futures and if you read the stories closely, a certain parallel exists with the later book (and movie and television show) *Logan's Run*.

The outstanding feature in the comic was the classy art of Russ Manning. Manning, who had done features for Dell and Gold Key since 1953, did the first twenty-one issues of the comic (aided in various degrees by assistant Mike Royer). Manning's art— slick, professional and possessing beautiful composition for comic book work— made the book one of the classics of the 1960s.

After a series of reprints Dan Spiegle drew one issue and then Paul Norris (pencils) and Mike Royer (inks) took over. The scripts also took on the flair (and titles like "Web of Fire") of Gaylord Dubouis.

There were several interesting sidelights to the book. At one time there was a fan page, for which fans drew their own versions of the robots of North Am. Two of the best were done by Alan Hutchinson and now professional artist Walt Simonson.

There is no doubt that after Manning left the book it lost its uniqueness (although circulation did go up for one brief year). Few artists can match the sleek and colorful style Manning transmitted to the comic book page.

The book ran as a quarterly until the 28th issue (November 1969) when it was cancelled. Exactly two years later it returned to the stands, reprinting the better Manning issues. After #34 it was cancelled again for a year and a half, again being reinstated in May 1974. There was a six month lull in between issues 42 and 43, but the book continued until it was cancelled for good in January of 1977 with #46.

A secondary feature in the book was a four-page strip called *The Aliens*. Drawn by Manning (and later Norris), it told the story of the first meeting in space, between a human and alien, 3000 light years from Earth. Capt. Johner and Cmdr Zara went through a series of interesting stories which dealt with bigotry, mistrust, difference of opinion and one trouble after another. All in all, it was an excellent series with a realistic view of such an encounter. It had its own book of reprints in 1967, all of them by Manning.

Gathered together by the mysterious Professor Xavier, the X-Men were mutants, teen-agers each possessing a unique power which made them out-of-place freaks in the outside world. (Although the current tendency is to equate the new team of X-Men with the Legion of Super-Heroes, the original X-Men's closest 1960s analogues would appear in DC's *My Greatest Adventure* the following year: the Doom Patrol.) Actually, their logical ancestors in the comics were Jack Kirby's various "kid gang" strips of the 1940s, notably the *Boy Commandos* and the *Newsboy Legion*. Sgt. Fury and Co. were the Boy Commandos grown-up, and the X-Men were the Newsboy Legionnaires as teens, with the addition of superpowers and a distaff member. Sombre Cyclops, conceited Angel, verbose Beast, immature Iceman, and much-sought-after Marvel Girl struck a chord with the fans, although they did not achieve the immediate acclaim accorded the Avengers, and remained a bi-monthly title while the latter team got a quick increase in frequency.

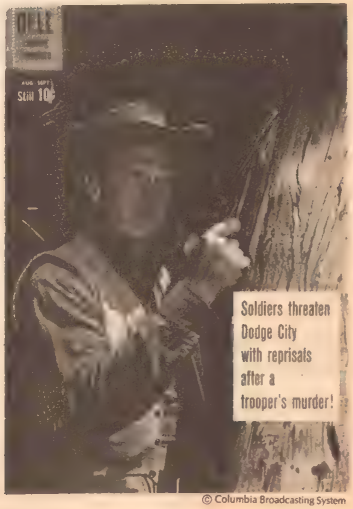
Thus stood the comics world at the end of 1963, as the real world mourned the death of President John Kennedy and welcomed the birth of the Beatles. In 1964, DC would issue more of the comics' classic stories while maintaining their now-burgeoning line-up of titles at a high level of quality, while Marvel would inaugurate back-up features in its less popular books after the fashion of Strange Tales, and debut the star of their tenth and (for the immediate future) final superhero book: *Daredevil, the Man Without Fear*.

20 Years Ago this Month

© wdp

© charlton

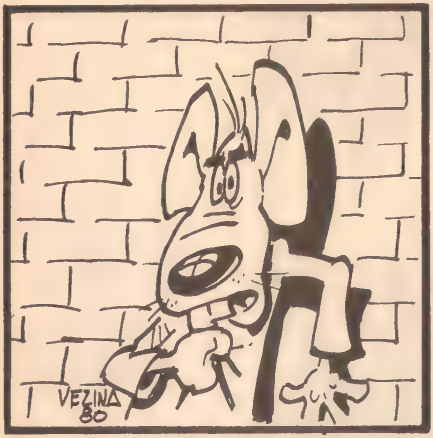
© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.



© Columbia Broadcasting System

ENTIRE CONTENTS © 1980 FANTACO ENTERPRISES INC.

THIS RODENT IS IN TROUBLE



Find out why, in the Big "ALL CRIME" Issue of Smilin' Ed Comics#2 Available September 29 from
FANTACO PUBLICATIONS

PRODUCT INFORMATION

SMILIN' ED COMICS #2. ALL CRIME ISSUE
70 LB. FULL COLOR GLOSS COVER
32 INTERIOR PAGES ON 50 LB. WHITE PAPER
ALL NEW STORIES, $1.25 COVER PRICE
SHIPPING DATE: SEPTEMBER 29, 1980

Special preview copies of ***SMILIN' ED COMICS #2*** *will be on sale at* ***FANTACON, September 27, 28*** *at the Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany, New York.*

DEALER AND DISTRIBUTOR RATES ON REQUEST

SINGLE COPIES $1.25 + 50¢ postage (Total $1.75)

SMILIN' ED COMICS *is published and distributed by:*
THE FANTACO CORPORATION
21 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12210
(518) 463-1400

The Fandom Zone

A complete section of useful information, fanzine reviews and columns geared to you, the involved comics fan

Fandom Almanac

Comics Clubs

If you belong to a comics club and would like to be listed in this space, please send all pertinent information to COMICS FEATURE.

Easley, SC. THE COLLECTORS CLUB. Monthly newsletter published. Membership: $5.00/year (includes 12 issues of newsletter). For info, contact: Steve Haynie, Rt. #6, Box 307, Easley, SC 29640.

Fullerton, CA. WEST COAST COMICS CLUB. Meets at Fullerton Science Lecture Hall #121, California State University, 7:00 p.m. Contact: Barry Short, 420 West 4th Street, San Dimas, CA 91773 (714) 599-2488.

Maplewood, N.J. COMICS CLUB MAPLEWOOD. Meets at 29 Norfolk Avenue, 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. Contact: Comic Club Maplewood, P. O. Box 65, Maplewood, NJ 07040.

Mt. Prospect, IL. PROSPECT HIGH SCHOOL COMIC BOOK CLUB. Meets at Prospect High School, Room 130, 801 W. Kensington Rd., every Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. Contact: R. Marr.

Nepean, Ontario, Canada. INTERNATIONAL COMIC COLLECTOR'S CLUB. Publishes a quarterly magazine and bulletin. Membership is $10/year. Contact: Don Coopman, 131 Monterey Drive, Nepean, Ontario, Canada K2Y 7A9.

Phoenix, AZ. PHOENIX COMIC BOOK CLUB. Meets at Quality Inn West, 2420 W. Thomas, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Contact: Neil Cohen, 3824 N. 15th Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85018 (602) 227-8701.

Pittsburgh, PA. PITTSBURGH COMIX CLUB. Meets at Eide's Comix & SF Shop, 11 Federal Street, every second Saturday from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Contact: Ben Pondexter, 827 Anaheim, Pittsburgh, PA 15210.

Rochester, NY. COMIC BOOK PEN PAL CLUB. Newsletter published. For info, contact: The Comic Book Man, 135 Glen Ellyn Way, Rochester, NY 14618.

St. Louis, MO. SPECTOR COMICS CLUB. Meets at Century Bowl, 7508 Michigan, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Contact: Anthony Gladish, 3917 Ohio Street, St Louis, MO 63118.

Urbana, IL. CHAMPAIGN-URBANA COMIC CLUB. Meets at the Illinois Union Building, Room 215, 712 W. Illinois, Urbana, every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Mel DeSart.

Vancouver, B.C., Canada. VANCOUVER COMIC BOOK CLUB. Publishes the VCBC Bulletin and sponsors conventions (V-Con). Contact: VCBC, P.O. Box 48873, Bentall Sta., Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7X 1A8.

Apas

An Amateur Press Association (or "apa" for short) is a sort of limited-circulation fanzine collective; in order to receive copies, one must contribute to them as well. Each member of an apa sends a specified number of copies of their contribution to the Central Mailer, who in turn collates all the memberzines into a collective work and disseminates them to every member. Each apa has its own distinct personality, which is determined by the slant of its subject matter, the minimum required contributions, frequency of publications, the size of its roster, and especially the people who are in it. The contents of any given memberzine in any given apa may consist of a diatribe on a comic book of twenty years ago, to what the individual member ate for breakfast the morning before. Most apas will send you a sample copy for your initial fee so you can get a better idea of what they're all about. One must experience an apa in order to appreciate the attraction of belonging to one.

The following is an index of all presently active comics-oriented apas. The information is correct at press time, but is subject to change at any moment. For more information about any of these apas —especially concerning openings in their rosters—contact the Central Mailers listed

APA - I

The "I" is for Index, and members contribute detailed indexes of issue-by-issue story titles, credits and dates of comics, writer and artist checklists, and others. The emphasis is on comics, but cartoons, films, science fiction/fantasy books and other topics are accepted. For serious data buffs. The roster is all but filled, so write first. Back mailings are available, averaging at $4.00 each.

Minimum Activity: 4 pages every mailing
Frequency: Quarterly
Membership Limit: 20
Initial Fee: $2.00
Central Mailer: Gene Reed
3708 Lakewood Drive
Huntsville, AL 35811

APA - 5

This was once among the most literate, interesting comics apas, with nowhere to go but down. Then it went down. A core of dedicated members are pushing to keep APA - 5 alive, and they're succeeding. Still a good place for the beginning apan, though its golden age is long gone.

Minimum Activity: 6 pages every three mailings
Frequency: Monthly
Membership Limit: 30
Initial Fee: $1.00
Central Mailer: Mike Bentley
315 East Laurel Street
Bellington, WA 98255

Fandom Zone

I'M PROUD OF YOU, SON. YOU'RE REALLY GETTING AFTER THAT HOMEWORK!
IF I DON'T FINISH THIS APA-ZINE, I'LL MISS THE DEADLINE DATE!
TIP-TAP-TIPPITY-TAP
HOMEWORK
dan patterson '80

CAPA-alpha
It has its ups and downs, but k-a was the first and still is the best of the apas. A long waitlist; expect to wait nine to twelve months before being invited to join, but waitlisters may contribute to and purchase back mailings depending on availability.
Minimum Activity: 4 pages every three mailings
Frequency: Monthly
Membership Limit: 40
Initial Fee: $4.00
Central Mailer: Robert Bronsteirl
20027-54 Community Street
Winnetka, CA 91306

INTERLAC
Devoted to comics, popular culture, and the Legion of Super-Heroes. Huge 400-page mailings are not uncommon, and the waitlist is very, very long; you can will your waitlist spot to your descendants. 'LAC is more comics-oriented than most ...several comics pros are active members, too.
Minimum Activity: 4 pages every three mailings,
Frequency: Bi-monthly
Frequency: Bi-monthly
Membership Limit: 50
Initial Fee: $3.00
Central Mailer: Thomas Burkert
P.O. Box 26
Mt. Kisco, NY 10549

NYAPA
Originally the New York Amateur Press Association, but no longer based in New York. Cozy, intimate faanishness just peripherally comics related.
Minimum Activity: 4 pages every two mailings
Frequency: Bi-monthly
Membership Limit: 20
Initial Fee: $1.00
Central Mailer; Chester Cox
P.O. Box 94
Shaw Air Force Base
S.C. 29152

PHOENIX
Another good place for beginning apan to start. Three years old, and PHOENIX is definitely on the way up. The waitlist is short, but growing.
Minimum Activity: 3 pages every three mailings
Frequency: Bi-monthly
Membership Limit: 30
Initial Fee: $2.00
Central Mailer: Alan Turniansky
148 Broadway #3-B
Lynbrook, NY 11563

SFPA
Its subject matter slants toward science fiction, though the initials stand for Southern Fandom Press Alliance, and its membership tends to be concentrated below the Mason-Dixon line. Waitlister may contribute to a separate section called Shadow-SFPA. A very classy group; not recommended for the inexperienced neofan.
Minimum Activity: 4 pages every two mailings
Frequency: Bi-monthly
Membership Limit: 30
Initial Fee: $2.00
Central Mailer: Guy Lillian III
102 S. Mendenhall #13
Greensboro, NC 27403

VOOTIE
For cartoonists of the funny-animal genre. Enclose samples of your artwork with your initial fee.
Minimum Activity: 1 page every two mailings
Frequency: Bi-monthly
Membership Limit: None
Initial Fee: $1.00
Central Mailer: Larry Becker
3557 26th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55406

WAPA
The Western Amateur Press Association, though not limited exclusively, is a regional comics apa for those living west of the Mississippi. A little over a year old, and still on somewhat shaky ground.
Minimum Activity: 5 pages every six mailings
Frequency: Bi-monthly
Membership Limit: 25
Initial Fee: $3.00
Central Mailer: Rick Foster
1669 Coronato Parkway #308
Thornton, CO 80229

X-APA
An offshoot of INTERLAC, but for X-Men fans. This one's just starting out; it's a good chance to get in on an apa from the beginning.
Minimum Activity: 4 pages every two mailings
Frequency: Bi-monthly
Membership Limit: 25
Initial Fee: $4.00
Central Mailer: Jeff Slaten
1330 Gaylord
Denver, Co 30206

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

New York: July 4-6

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED

People attending Phil Seuling's New York Comic Art Convention this Fourth of July weekend narrowly missed seeing something that surely would have been unforgettable: the Batsignal projected onto the Empire State Building in honor of the fortieth anniversary of the Batman's own comic. The City of New York, the owners of the Empire State Building, and DC Comics had all given their permission for the stunt, but the project had to be scrapped when the owners of the hotel from which the Batsignal was to be projected demanded exorbitant payments for insurance along with the services of an electrician for forty-eight hours and special security guards.

BATMAN GOES HOLLYWOOD

At the convention DC Comics made an official announcement that, as readers of the fan press have long known, there would be a new *Batman* movie. Financed by Polygram Pictures, the film is to be titled *The New Adventures of Batman and Robin* and is budgeted at approximately fifteen million dollars. In attendance were DC president Sol Harrison, DC publisher Jenette Kahn, and the Batman's creator Bob Kane. The film's co-producer Michael Uslan, a former DC employee who in recent years has been doing legal work for United Artists on such films as *Rocky II*, *Apocalypse Now* and *The Black Stallion*, made a speech about his intentions for the movie that stirred the audience. Uslan emphasized that the film would not be about "Batman" but about "*the* Batman," whom he characterized as "a creature of the night" who "will scare the hell out of criminals instead of making them laugh themselves to death." Uslan sees himself as having "the opportunity to make" the film "a Batman fan's dream." Instead of just being "another comic book movie," Uslan states that this will be the first film based on comic book material that "will actually live up to the concepts the comic is based upon." There will be "mystery and atmosphere" in the film, he asserted, but "no camp humor." Uslan said that the *Batman* movie will take as its models three series of *Batman* stories: the first ten *Batman* issues of *Detective* by Bob Kane and Bill Finger, the collaboration of Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams, and those of Steve Englehart and Marshall Rogers. It had been planned to announce the director and screenwriter of the film at the convention, but the choices have still not been made. Casting will not be done for several months.

THE MEN BEHIND THE BAT

DC constructed a *Batman* display that filled an entire room, including a continuous slide show of all the *Batman* covers from 1940 to preliminary sketches for as yet unpublished issues, a model of the Batcave, and demonstrations by Jack C. Harris on making a person up as Two-Face. (Harris's models were Harlan Ellison and *The Comic Journal*'s Kim Thompson.) The well-dressed conventioneer ended up sporting a "1980—The Year of the Batman" button along with a 1980 Pogo Presidential Campaign boater from *The Okeefenokee Star* table.

There was also a *Batman* panel made up of editor Paul Levitz, writers Len Wein and Marv Wolfman, former *Batman* editor Julius Schwartz in a rare convention appearance, and artist Jim Aparo in his first convention appearance. Aparo spoke of how what he called "the darkness of the character" made drawing the Batman appealing to him. He likes "the mysterioso effect" the Batman creates, and said that he automatically sets a *Batman* scene at night if the writer does not specify otherwise, because that is where the Batman works best. Aparo likes the fact that the Batman has no superpowers but is a "thinking character" instead, who solves crimes intellectually, and also likes the character's use of "acrobatics."

Schwartz revealed that the name of Robin's Aunt Harriet was taken from an old Hoagy Carmichael song, and that the name of the Batman's mysterious adversary from the early Schwartz years on the series, the Outsider, was taken from H. P. Lovecraft. Schwartz said he revealed the Outsider to be Alfred when he had to bring the butler back because of the 1966 *Batman* TV show, but said that when the Outsider was introduced, he had no idea who he would turn out to be. Schwartz had killed off Alfred (only temporarily, as it turned out) in one of the first *Detectives* he edited because, he stated, he "always likes to do something a bit different with a character" when he takes one over. Killing off Alfred was starting off his work on Batman "with a bang." Similarly, to "mark" the *Batman* stories he edited, Schwartz placed the yellow oval around Batman's insignia, which he describes as a "full moon."

Asked about the death of Iris Allen, the Flash's wife, Levitz said that it was a good idea to kill off major characters from time to time to generate suspense in the books, so that the reader will not take it for granted that the major characters are never in real danger. Schwartz disagreed, stating that we all know that the Batman will never be killed; suspense in a superhero story, he asserted, comes not in the matter of whether the characters will escape doom, but in how they will do so.

Len Wein announced that the villains in the projected DC-Marvel *Batman-Hulk* teamup book will be the Joker and the Shaper, and that *Mystery in Space* will have all new material by the fifth or sixth new issue. Much of the *Time Warp* inventory material, he reported, will not see print in *Mystery in Space*.

Levitz reported that Gerry Conway has done a *Batman* novel featuring the Joker which will probably be released at the time the *Batman* movie comes out, and that Elliot Maggin's second *Superman* novel will appear next year. Levitz said that the idea behind *Detective* 500, which he is editing (see separate story) was "to take the best people in comics and do special stories" and that he hoped to do "something spectacular" like this every year. Al-

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

though he said that DC could not now afford to produce books solely for the comics specialty shop market, he thinks that in three to five years the market may have grown big enough so that DC will do such books.

ELLISON UNLEASHED

Harlan Ellison, one of the convention's guests of honor, mesmerized his enormous audience with a reading of the opening of his new unpublished horror story "Pet"; thoroughly entertained them with a reading of the first half of his semi-autobiographical novella "All the Lies That Are My Life" (which will be the November cover story in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* and then appear in his new collection for Houghton Mifflin, *Shatterday*); and reduced them to hysterical laughter with his tales of Harlan Versus The Army and Harlan Versus Hollywood. The latter was the story of how a television studio plagiarized the story about an experimental robot policeman that he originally wrote with Ben Bova, "Brillo." Ellison took the studio to court for copyright infringement, and, after four years of legal battles, finally won, receiving payment for damages in an amount he is forbidden to specify, but which he reports is "considerably over $280,000." Summing up the experience, Ellison proclaimed that "doing something against all the odds is the greatest high" one can get. "They teach you from birth to be a coward," he asserted, but "if you beat the shit out of them, you'll feel like Zorro," and he hoped to show by his experiences "that you all can do it—if a schmuck like me can do it, so can you."

Ellison reported that his long-awaited *The Last Dangerous Visions* would be out by Christmas of 1981; that Irvin Kershner, director of *The Empire Strikes Back*, was going to direct his screenplay of Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot* for Warner Brothers; that a novelization of his short story "A Boy and His Dog," entitled *Blood's a Rover*, would come out this fall; that he was working on a film adaptation of Marvel's Black Widow —and that a villain he had created named the Silver Fog would be used in the newly revived *Dial 'H' for Hero*.

ALSO PRESENT

Besides those mentioned, among those attending the convention were special guests Michael Kaluta, Wendy and Richard Pini, Fred Hembeck, Bob Boze Bell of *Honkytonk Sue*, Boris Vallejo and Dave Simons, and also Will Eisner, Harvey Kurtzman, Jim Shooter, Art Spiegelman, Selby Kelly, C. C. Beck, Trina Robbins, Marshall Rogers, Walt Simonson, Joe Orlando, Chris Claremont, Don McGregor, Denny O'Neil, Archie Goodwin, Wally Wood, Ken Steacy, Mike Zeck, Mark Gruenwald, Mary Jo Duffy, Michael Fleisher, Tom Orzechowski, Steve Leialoia, Mike Nasser, Mike Friedrich, Denis Kitchen, Cat Yronwode, John Caldwell, *National Lampoon* cartoon editor Shary Flenniken, *Heavy Metal* artist Matt Howarth, and many others. —P.S.

Chicago: July 18-20

MUTANT MANUEVERS

John Byrne turned up at the Chicago Comicon's *X-Men* panel wearing a T-shirt reading "SHE'S DEAD AND SHE'S GOING TO STAY DEAD." A poll taken of the audience revealed that while most of them seemed to agree with Byrne that bringing Jean Grey back from the dead would be a "cheat," interestingly enough, most of them also believed that sooner or later someone at Marvel would indeed resurrect her. Chris Claremont stated that a new Banshee, a woman this time, would be introduced in *Spider-Woman*, which he is now writing, and that she would have sonic powers he had wanted to have the original Banshee use. The X-Men will guest star in issues 36 and 37 of *Spider-Woman*, and Byrne will have some of them appear in *Captain America*, where it will be revealed that Captain America and Wolverine met back in World War II. Scott and the Man-Thing will both appear in *X-Men* 144, although Scott will not return to the team that issue. Issue 150 will probably be the culmination of a story in which Magneto attempts to trigger the volcanic "Ring of Fire" that lies around the Pacific Ocean. Claremont hopes to make the Hellfire Club into regular *X-Men* villains, and is planning a story in which Kitty Pryde's parents withdraw her from Professor Xavier's school and send her to the Massachusetts academy headed by Emma Frost, the White Queen of the Hellfire Club.

THE STATE OF STRIPS

The writers' panel spent a good amount of time on the subject of comic strips, probably due to the presence of *Dick Tracy* writer Max Allen Collins. Collins stated that he was currently working on two possible strips for the Chicago Tribune–New York News Syndicate: one was about "rock and roll and teenagers" and the other was the "continuation" of a "long-running strip" that the syndicate needs "real fast," but which he could not name as yet. Roger Stern revealed that he had worked in the past on a possible *Muppets* comic strip with Marie Severin. Collins pointed to this strip as an example of a problem with the syndicates today: it was

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

nearly impossible, he said, to sell a new strip to the syndicates today unless it is based on an already existing and successful property (like *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*). Another problem in strips that was discussed was the fact that continuity strips have to be written to take into account the fact that some papers run the strip seven days a week, others six days, others five, and some just on Sundays.

On the question of writer-editors Stern said that he had heard Stan Lee say many times that he wished he had had an editor to catch his own mistakes. Marv Wolfman declared that the best work in comics was done by writer-editors, naming Will Eisner, Stan Lee, Roy Thomas and Harvey Kurtzman as examples. Moderator Paul Kupperberg protested that comics are "just fun" and "not Dostoevsky" while at the same time declaring that the men Wolfman named are "geniuses."

SHOOTER ON EDITING

At the editors' panel Len Wein said that he had never killed off a major character. Shouts of "Jarella" immediately came from the audience, whereupon Wein informed them that he never meant for Jarella to be dead when that wall toppled onto her. An alien's body works differently than our own, he said, and he fully intended to bring her back; however, when he left the book, Wein explained, his successors assumed Jarella really was dead. Jim Shooter remarked that he believed that if a character dies he or she should stay dead to insure the stories' credibility. This rule applies to Jarella, Shooter stated, although there are and can be exceptions to the rule.

One character that Shooter said "has got to die" for real is Aunt May, although he added that this "may take a while." Continuing along a related theme Shooter asserted that he was "perfectly willing to make changes in longtime series" if those changes were "well-considered" and "logical"; one has to "think out the ramifications of changes" before they are implemented. Moreover, rather than going in for major developments like deaths, which Shooter contends are easy to do, Shooter prefers to have writers work on what he terms "inward" development of a character. Shooter's model is Denny O'Neil's "There is No Hope in Crime Alley," which he claims did not change anything in the Batman's life, but nevertheless ended up increasing the reader's knowledge of the character. Another character Shooter has decided will die is Captain Marvel (see Short Subjects).

Although the *Daredevil* "angel dust" story will first appear as a comics specialty shop "album," Shooter indicated that afterwards it may run in a black-and-white magazine so that it would be available in a low price format to kids whom the book could help by convincing them of the drug's dangers.

The question arose as to whether with the heavy traffic of writers between Marvel and DC in recent years, Marvel and DC books were becoming more alike and losing their particular house styles. Wein thought that "the characters write themselves" so that the same writer would do DC and Marvel stories differently and a *Batman* story would hence be very different from a *Spider-Man* tale by the same author. Shooter responded that he thought that "DC has been trying to emulate Marvel a lot" and that having "Marvel-trained writers" will bring to DC "some of the good things at Marvel" such as "dynamics" and "characterization." On the other hand, Shooter says he believed he brought "good things" from DC to Marvel, such as an insistence on "plot," a "knowledge of story mechanics," and a "sense of structure" for stories. "So hopefully," Shooter concluded, "we'll all wind up with better comics." Nevertheless, he added, the two companies will remain different because "the leaders set different philosophies," noting that he and DC's Joe Orlando disagree almost entirely on what they think comics art should look like, for example.

ARTISTS ON COMICS ART

The first question at the artists' panel concerned their reactions to the "album" format for graphic novels with their better printing, paper and sometimes color than standard comics. Frank Miller and Mike Grell approved of them. Joe Staton commented that it would be nice to have a book that would "last for years" unlike the regular comics that utilize newsprint, but thought that the albums would become "pretentious." Staton thought it would be "wonderful" to have a book that combined the "vitality of doing garbage" with the degree of "respectability" that the high quality printing albums have gives. Mike Vosburg said he thinks an audience is developing "that wants to have more than a regular comic" gives them, but he dislikes the "sense of pretentiousness" he sees in the "illustrated story format" as well as the idea of "something above and beyond comics." Vosburg remarked that he likes the better "album" books but thinks that in others "the gut-level storytelling isn't there." John Byrne commented simply that "comics means garbage paper" and that "Big glossy fancy-color books are fantastic, I love them, but they're not comics and I'm not interested in seeing or doing them at all."

In the course of the panel Byrne ventured that he would like to do a six-part Alpha Flight mini-series someday; mail response on Alpha Flight has been "phenomenal" in the United States, he claimed, although, strangely, not in Canada.

Miller referred to a statement by Denny O'Neil that comics by and large are to do no more than entertain, but that sometimes the opportunity arises to

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

do something more with them than that. The *Daredevil* angel dust story, Miller feels, was such an opportunity, and he was critical of the Comics Code's attitude towards the story, which he characterized as "Ignorance is bliss." The Code, Miller asserted, seemed to think that children should be prevented from knowing *anything* about drugs, but Miller believes that children will find out that drugs exist one way or another. Miller does not believe that the story would encourage children to take drugs; rather, it shows death to be a result of taking angel dust.

The panel was asked why they liked doing comic books. Byrne spoke of the "eight-year-old fan who lives in the back of my head" who gets so excited at being able to draw the superheroes he has always loved. Staton asserted that in "such a low form of public entertainment" an artist is not really drawing actions but "manipulating icons" like Superman and Captain America who are going through "ritual poses." The artist is hence "dealing with [his] own subconscious" and the subconscious of other people. "What we're doing here is not Great Art, not the Sistine Chapel," observed Mike Grell, "but it *is* an artform. But I like it because it's just plain fun . . . .Entertainment—that's the whole name of the game."

BACKSTAGE AT MARVEL

The Marvel panel opened with Jim Shooter explaining to a questioner why Jean Grey was killed off. He explained that the reason why he did not know that Dark Phoenix had destroyed an inhabited planet in *X-Men* 135 until it had already been printed was because he does not want "to second-guess my editors' moves." Hence, he does not look at the stories until they have already been printed and the "make-readys" are sent to the Marvel offices.

Shooter reported that John Buscema has been asked to do storyboards for Universal's forthcoming *Silver Surfer* movie. As for the latest Marvel newspaper insert, Shooter said that the reason that it only appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* was that they learned from the first insert that they "didn't have the manpower" to do an insert in seven cities' papers at once. From now on, Marvel will add a new city with each insert it publishes. It was also revealed that Marvel has signed a contract to do the comic book adaptation of the upcoming *Conan* movie. As for what will happen in Marvel's *Star Wars* comic, Shooter stated that the films' executive producer George Lucas was going to make a three-hour-long videotape explaining what they could do in the comic before the next movie comes out.

Several business matters were explained during the panel. For a book to be cancelled at Marvel, Shooter asserted, one of four people has to propose the cancellation—Cadence Publishing president James Galton, vice president in charge of circulation Ed Shukin, Stan Lee or Shooter himself—and all four of them have to agree on it. It was explained too that the name of a character cannot be copyrighted, only trademarked, and then only if the name is used in a certain way. Characters have to be used every two years in order for a company to hold onto a trademark. This explains why Marvel can have a Daredevil character even though there was a comics hero named Daredevil back in the 1940s. An encircled "R" symbol after a character's name or likeness means it is a registered trademark, but the marking "TM" for trademark represents merely an unofficial claim, bearing no real legal force: the government has not yet ruled on the trademark's validity, and might not accept it. As for DC and Marvel's joint trademarking of the word "superhero," it was contended on the panel that the companies did it "not to hinder others" from doing superheroes but merely to have a word with which to describe their characters to potential licensees. Film and television producers and makers of various projects would then associate the term "superhero" with DC and Marvel properties.

Shooter asked the audiences to call out the names of the "worst" comics Marvel was now doing. *Ghost Rider* and *Rom* got some votes, but the winners appeared to be *What If*, *She-Hulk*, *Defenders* and *Spider-Woman*.

AN ALTERNATIVE FUTURE

Don McGregor and Marshall Rogers held a slide show on their new graphic novel, *Detectives, Inc.: A Remembrance of Threatening Green*, which made its debut at the convention. The two creators took a very different view of the comics medium than some of those expressed on earlier panels at the convention. "No comics editors today have faith in you as an audience," asserted McGregor, arguing that mainstream comics editors would not have allowed them to do the crosscutting between two narratives in *Detectives*' prologue for fear it would confuse the readers. McGregor contended that while the mainstream comics editors "say they love the medium," they won't "expand" it: "superheroes and funny animals are okay," McGregor declared, "but comics can do a lot more." McGregor said he did not think that the comics audience changes every three years as others have claimed, and observed that "all comics don't have to be the same." Rogers pointed out that "We're looking for a different market" than mainstream comics, an older audience. Rogers "would like to get a younger audience, too," but not at the cost of losing the older readers. Rogers' goal is to do work that combines "intellectual value for older readers" with "entertainment value for younger readers." McGregor believes that in a good comic "every scene should make you feel a little." McGregor told the audience that "You can affect this medium. Every time you buy one of these books [alternative graphic novels] you make it possible for more" to be done. "You can open" the comics medium "up to new areas."

ROY'S ROSTRUM

The Chicago Comicon's final panel was given to its guest of honor, Roy Thomas. Thomas explained that he had had only one discussion with the people at DC about specifically what

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

he would be writing for them, that being when he was in New York a few months before, because he could not officially start work for DC until September 1. He told the audience that he would like to do some established DC characters and also to create some new ones, noting that he would be getting a percentage of the merchandising money on any property he creates at DC whereas he would not have at Marvel. (However, Conan Properties voluntarily gives him a percentage of the merchandising profits on Red Sonja.)

Thomas said he will be doing "some version of *All-Star*" which will be "partly the Justice Society of America and partly not" but which "will not interfere" with past or present Justice Society stories. He has not yet decided which characters he will concentrate on in this series; he said he will use "whatever they want" and that he himself wants. Nevertheless, Thomas stated that his preference would be to use Hawkman (wearing the 1947 version of his mask), the Golden Age Atom (because he is "short and powerful"), Dr. Mid-Nite, and the Shining Knight, whom he called the "Thor of his day" and an inspiration for Marvel's Black Knight. Thomas would like to use Doctor Fate and the Spectre in the Justice Society from time to time, but feels they are too powerful to be used in the team every issue. However, Thomas would like to do a solo series starring Doctor Fate. Thomas finds the Spectre "a beautiful visual character," and notes that he "may agree" with the decision that was made to cancel the Michael Fleisher *Spectre* series for what Thomas termed "aesthetic reasons." Hawkman is "my all-time favorite character," declared Thomas, primarily because of Joe Kubert's work on the hero. Thomas also wants to do a Justice League-Justice Society team-up adventure someday after Gerry Conway leaves *Justice League of America*, but that will be a long time off: Conway, Thomas reported, wants to stay on the book long enough to beat Gardner Fox's record writing the series.

Thomas said he would also "probably do a new sword-and-sorcery character" who will combine "whatever I like in Conan" with anything he would have liked to do differently with the character. For one thing, Thomas stated, the new sword-and-sorcery hero would probably be more intelligent than Conan since he prefers writing intelligent characters. Thomas asserted that he finds Conan a "two-dimensional" character, even in Robert E. Howard's own stories.

What else would Thomas like to do at DC? Well, he would like to revive DC's short-lived World War II hero from the 1970s, Steel. He would also like to handle the old Quality heroes DC calls the Freedom Fighters: Thomas "loved" the story in which Len Wein brought them back, but he did not like the way they were handled in their own DC series. He would also like to work with Plastic Man and the Blackhawks.

Unlike other Marvel writers who have migrated to DC, Thomas confessed having little interest in writing *Superman* or *Batman*, in part because each appears in so many books that he would be unable to control the characters. He finds the idea of writing *Wonder Woman* more appealing since there is only one *Wonder Woman* book. Asked if he was interested in doing the *Legion of Super-Heroes* Thomas declared that not only that "I don't like it" but that he has "never read" it. In Thomas's view, the Legion is made up of a lot of people each of whom has a superpower but "no personality." Still, Thomas calls the *Legion* "a very good comic for younger kids" and wishes there were more like it. "Comics used to be aimed at kids" of between five and seven years of age, Thomas explained, but "now they're aimed at adolescents." As a result, Thomas does not think the companies are "hooking" the younger kids into reading comics, and hence Thomas would like there to be "a wider range of comics" that appeal to different age levels, although he himself "wouldn't particularly want to write" the ones for the youngest readers. (Thomas did not say whether or not he thought there should be comics aimed at an adult audience.) He added that he and Stan Lee liked the idea of "multi-level comics" that could appeal to different age groups. "All good fiction," Thomas asserted, and "even the better comic books work on two or three different levels." On the other hand, Thomas contends that having a "continuing character" in stories "guarantees" that they will be "a lower form of literature," and claims that, for example, *Don Quixote* would not have had the same impact had its story spread out over twenty novels.

Thomas does not have "much interest in editing other writers' work" at DC. For that matter, he does not like the idea of writing for editors there himself, but he said he likes Paul Levitz and Len Wein. Thomas also professes "tremendous respect" for Julius Schwartz but is uncertain if they would work well together. Still, Thomas maintains that he would now rather work for editors he "liked and respected" at DC than work at Marvel. Thomas professes "a lot of fondness for Marvel" and even what he calls "some misplaced fondness for Stan" and claims that until a few months before, he thought he would continue to work for Marvel for another "five, ten, twenty years." However, Thomas maintains that he dislikes the "administration" that has been in power at Marvel over "the last two years." In any event, although he would have preferred to stay at Marvel, Thomas said he felt he had "reached a dead end" with many of the Marvel characters: he had already worked with them, and had grown "tired" of them. Now he has "a real enthusiasm for working at DC" and says that "maybe they will not read them as adolescents, either. Therefore, something new and exciting will come out of it." Thomas's first work at DC will be writing dialogue for some stories Gerry Conway is plotting. Thomas does not intend to write using the traditional DC method of doing full scripts before work is started on the art.

Thomas had worked briefly at DC in the 1960s before joining Marvel, and he revealed that back then he had written two stories which were never published. One was a *Jimmy Olsen* story in which Olsen attempted to infiltrate gangs of juvenile delinquents; elements of this story were later incorporated into an *Olsen* story involving a hunchback. The other was a *Elongated Man* tale that Thomas would still like to see printed. Thomas also revealed that in the early 1960s he and Jerry Bails had suggested reviving the Atom as a six-inch-tall superhero at the same time that Gil Kane also independently suggested the idea.

Thomas declared it to be "abominable" that merchandisers create characters and then a comics company does books about them. Sometimes such projects work out, he conceded, giving *The Micronauts* as an example, but he dislikes the trend. Continuing on the theme, Thomas contended that the reason he left the *Star Wars* comic book was that he did not have "the leeway with George Lucas's fantasies" to do what he might want with them as he did with the fantasies Stan Lee created, like *The Avengers*.

ALSO PRESENT

Others attending the convention included Jenette Kahn, Joe Orlando, Neal Adams (appearing on a panel discussing the trilogy of science fiction plays for which he designed the sets and costumes, *Warp*), Jack C. Harris, Paul Levitz, Frank Brunner, Peter Gillis, Roger Slifer, Joe Rubinstein, Laurie Sutton, Dave Manak, Richard Burton, Mike Friedrich, Steve Mitchell, and frequent panel moderator Mike Gold. —P.S.

COMICON HIGHLIGHTS

Fandom Zone

Trufan Confessions by Jay Zilber

"What This Convention Needs . . ."

As we come to the end of another season of summer comics conventions, I find myself feeling the effects of indigestion. Just like McDonald's Hamburgers, there's a Creation Convention in every major city now; and again, just like McDonalds, they're exactly the same wherever you go. Every region of the country has its own major bash. Here on the East Coast it's Phil Seuling's Comic Art Convention (popularly shortened to Julycon); the midwest has Chicagocon, and the West Coasters flock to San Diegocon, and there are countless large and small affairs serving the areas in between. Yet there's an enormous *sameness* about each of them. Some are run with more class than others; the personal stamp of each convention organizer is usually apparent. Still as a veteran of maybe two dozen comics conventions, I can't shake the feeling of deja vu. The same dealers, the same panels, the same programming. We've seen it all before. Conventions have become as formularized as the very comics to which they owe their existence.

It's no secret that comics fandom owes much of its culture to its great grand-uncle, science fiction fandom. But nothing underscores the difference between the two than a comparison of the two subculture's conventions. Owing to a quirk of fate (or perhaps bad judgement), the major New York City sf event, Empiricon, was scheduled for the July 4th weekend this year. This, of course, is the traditional date of Julycon, and the conflict of timing did nobody much good (except for Harlan Ellison, who was able to appear at both cons at once.) Still, for those of us who shuttled across the ten blocks separating the two con sites, the differences between them were driven home, hard.

It would be easy to chalk up these differences to the basic composition of the two fandoms. Of course these stereotypes don't always hold true, but on the one hand, comics fandom is populated with a large number of 12–18 year old males; it has a modest turnover, and on the whole it is heavily money-oriented, as evidenced by the amount of space given over to the dealers' room. By contrast, sf fandom is more evenly split between males and females, age 18 and over; their cons are smaller, more intimate affairs for the most part, geared towards programming and socializing. (This gives rise to the myth that sf fandom is something to "graduate" into.) Those of us who dabble in both have a unique opportunity to observe the differing customs and protocols. And from that vantage point, it seems to me that comics fans are getting thoroughly shortchanged these days. In general, science fiction conventions offer a lower admission price and a variety of conveniences, amenities, and common-sense ideas that simply don't *exist* for comics conventions anymore. (The curious thing is that comicons grew out of sf cons and gradually *discarded* these trappings as it outgrew the intimacy of early fandom.)

It used to be a major embarrassment for an editor or publisher of one comics company to admit reading the other companies' comics. Whether it was supposed to indicate that he was looking for ideas to rip off or simply an act of disloyalty to admit the competition published something worth reading, I'm not sure. In any case, I would like to propose that the many people involved in organizing comics conventions take a good, hard look at their competition—not only among one another, but especially in their own roots. The convention scene desperately needs an innovative shot in the arm . . .and not necessarily with new ideas either, as there are plenty of *old* ones that are long overdue to be dusted off and reexamined.

1. THE DEALERS' ROOM Given that it is impractical to go back to the old days of "a little room off to the side," there has got to be an alternative to the congestion of current dealers' room set-ups. I've been to some cons in the past couple of years that are so jam-packed with flesh that it is literally impossible to *move* in the dealers' room let alone approach the tables to examine their wares. It's a suffocating, dehumanizing experience, and I can't for the life of me imagine why the particular convention organizers involved continue to do business with that particular inadequate hotel for as many years as they did. And yet, the whole problem might have been resolved if they'd simply taken out eight or ten tables and widened the aisles. A more enlightened alternative would be to set up programming and facilities that would entice people *out* of the dealers' room for awhile . . .but then, I guess the dealers wouldn't be too happy about that. Heaven forbid.

2. REST AND RELAXATION All too many cons are set up in such a way that ignores the reality of the situation: people cannot walk around in dealers' rooms for nine hours nonstop. They like to sit down and rest, to talk among themselves, to read their lastest haul of four-color treasures. Where do they go? Hotel employees are constantly shooing congoers out of stairwells and hallways, and program rooms are filled with noisy, disruptive people who, through no fault to their own, have no place else to go. Why can't some enterprising convention set up a hospitality room, with chairs and tables, maybe a soft drink vending machine and a bulletin board for wayward fans to post messages for one another?

3. *NAME BADGES* I *know*, they're expensive, but I want to know who I'm meeting when I go to a convention. I would gladly pay an extra 25¢ on top of the already-inflated admission price for a little plastic card-holder and an official convention name badge. They could even be *optional*; as it is now, they're rejected out of hand in favor of the much cheaper (and dehumanizing) hand stamp. Maybe the sf cons can afford badges because they don't spend as much on television advertising.

4. *PROGRAM BOOKS* I have nothing against the sort of fan/pro art complications and short feature articles that comprise the filler material in most such programs. Yet there is, almost as a rule, a glaring omission—perhaps because it's not comics oriented. Many con attendees are from out of town or from outlying areas, and they do not know their way around the city. A good program book should include a map of the area, a restaurant guide, a list of nearby interesting landmarks, tourist traps, and other diversions in the neighborhood. Few of us actually spend an entire two, three, or four-day period cooped up within the confines of the convention hotel proper. (I know you con organizers don't want to *encourage* us to desert your con, but believe it or not, we'll do it anyway.)

5. *FILM PROGRAMS* One of the first cons I ever went to, a 1974 Detroit Triple Fan Fair, spotlighted a film contest of independent and amateur filmmakers, and I've never seen anything to match it. Anyone can rent a Mel Brooks movie; if I'm paying for a con admission, I want to see films and shows that I can't frequently see at local theatres or on television. (And I'm quite frankly, offended by the concept of replacing a film program with a videocassette recorder and a wide-screen projection system if it'll be used to show cartoons taped right off local independent station broadcasts. I *don't* need to pay admission for that.) I would make a point to stick around for a film program that offered such rarities as, say, the animated feature by Chuck Jones of *The Phantom Tollbooth*, or original *Rocky and*

Fandom Zone

Bullwinkle episodes with 1961 commercials *intact*, or just about any Japanese animation that isn't seen stateside with dubbed voices. A tip of this Tired Old Fan's beanie would go to anyone who could latch onto and show episodes of *Fawlty Towers'* second season, which hasn't yet aired locally. It wouldn't be easy to round up this sort of fare—but it *can* be done, and it *could* make or break attendence records if properly publicized.

6. *COSTUME PARADES* These events are often touted as the most popular of the entire convention, and after all this time you'd think they'd be done *right*. In recent years they've started giving under-twelve contestants a separate award, so they won't have to compete with more experienced costume designers. Still, it's not enough; how can an authentic-down-to-the-last-embroidery Dr. Strange suit compete with a half-naked barbarianess or a technically-brilliant Cylon Warrior? It's judging apples, oranges, and scotch tape! Instead of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes, why not devise categories for the most authentic, the most original, the funniest costume, *et al*? (And one more word to the wise: If these masquerades are known to be the most popular events, why is nothing done to make it possible for the enormous crowds to *see* the costumes over one another's heads? Constestents should be able to stand on an elevated platform at eye-level. Where a platform is not practical, there is another simple solution. Don't parade them at the far end of a long hall: turn the chairs sideways and let them promenade down *the length* of the hall instead of the width. Or turn the chairs inward and let the contestants display themselves in the center of the room. Simple solutions to simple problems!

7. *ART SHOWS* Let's see some substantial prizes for these, in the same cash range as the costume parade. Why should a creative person be penalized if s/he's a better artist (or writer) than seamstress? And let's see the winners' work published in next year's program book, while we're at it. Winning a convention art or writing contest doesn't mean a whole lot to anyone if nobody gets to *see* the winning entry.

8. *PROGRAMMING* Contrary to what is—unfortunately—common belief, there is a universe of fandom beyond sitting alone in a corner, reading and buying comics. The panels at most conventions go a little ways toward publicizing this little known fact, but they don't go nearly far enough. Most of them simply reinforce the notion that the Pro is Ghod, and his purpose is to be harassed for autographs and sketches. For a time, the Creation Con people tried to develop some imaginative programming, recreating various game shows with comics pros instead of celebrities, with mixed results. A good try, but what is missing from these efforts is programming that is *fan*-oriented, that elevates the common comics fan to the proper level of importance a fan should have at a convention that is put on ostensibly for comics fans. It would be fascinating, I think to put Gary Groth, Mike Tiefenbacher, James Van Hise, and Dean Mullaney on a fanzine editor's panel, and let the chips fall where they may. While they're at it, why not have them organize a fanzine publishing workshop, to help would-be publishers get started?

I'd like to see some fan-produced plays and skits, music—anything that would carry the message, "Dammit, fans are talented too!" In fact that's perhaps the fundamental difference between comics and sf conventions. Sf cons take that for granted.

If a foresighted, innovative convention planner took just a few of these tips to heart, his supporters *might* have a more positive, enthusiastic interest in his show. Perhaps as word of mouth got around, his paid attendence figures would pick up as well. By most accounts, convention attendence is on a downslide these days. Perhaps this is as much due to the sheer proliferation and frequency of cons nowadays as it is to any specific failing in the convention program itself. Nonetheless, some of us still-active older fans attend these cons not to worship the Pro or to celbrate the almighty comics medium, but to meet old friends and to make new ones, to communicate with one another about our common interests—which coincidently, includes comic books. Current convention programs simply do not serve our interests. More than a few people in my immediate fannish circles attend cons regularly without paying admission; there's nothing past the security guard which interests them when there's a fan party in room 1308-A . . .or a science fiction con down the street. And if the comics convention scene doesn't start picking up soon, I'm not at all averse to the idea of graduating into science-fiction fandom someday . . .

SECOND GENESIS
1314 S.E. HARRISON
PORTLAND, OR 97214

ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS

Orders $7.50 and under add .50 for postage. $7.51 to $15.00 add .25 for postage. Whenever possible please list alternatives. Orders over $25.00 may take a complimentary 10% discount as long as one item is no more than half of your total order. Items on the discount list do not qualify for the 10% discount having been discounted. Any item with a diamond before the description, you must be 18 years or older. Canada & Foreign Countries: Add .60 for postage on orders under $6.00. Over that amount add 10% to your order. All payments must be made in US Funds only. Thank you for your support.

NEW ARRIVALS

THE ART OF JOHN BRYNE Long delayed publication but well worth the wait. Contains pages of drawings and sketch work, check-list, a new 25 page story, and an interview with the man discussing in detail his work with focus on the X-Men. Interior color, 64 pages, softbound. $5.95

CAPTAIN CANUCK 10 George Freeman art. Just arrived. .50

CEREBUS THE AARDVARK

An entertaining sword & sorcery satire based on the characters of Robert E. Howard. The best animal strips we've read.

2 We've managed to obtain a few copies of this early issue. $4.00
5,6,7 $1.75 each
8,9 $1.00
10 Red Sophia returns. $1.00
11 The Merchant and the Cockroach. $1.00
12 The Cockroach and Cerebus on the trail of gold. Elrod the Albino guest appearence. $1.00
13 Our hero is caught between the forces of religious villagers and Necross the Mad. $1.00
14 Inside the Walls of Palnu, Cerebus is appointed Kitchen Staff Supervisor by Lord Julius (a Groucho Marx character). $1.00
15 A Day in the Pits of the City of Palnu. $1.00

COMICS JOURNAL 56 Interview with Michael Fleisher artist for Jonah Hex. Comic reviews: Batman, the Tomb of Dracula, Legion of Super-Heroes. $1.50

CINEMAGIC 7 Basic Cartoon Animation, report of the world's first claymation feature film, tools and equipment for the filmmaker, easy kaleidoscopic effects. $1.75

ELFQUEST 7 Just in. Need we say more? $1.25

FANTASTIC FILMS 18 Interview with Empire Strikes Back producer Gary Kurtz and animator Phil Tippett. Twilight Zone retrospect and episode guide. Articles on the Changeling, Galaxina, and Dungeons and Dragons. $2.25

FIRST KINGDOM ISSUES 1 - 10 $1.00 each
11 and 12 $1.25each

FANGORIA 7 The Shining! Report on "Maniac!" The Curse of Frankenstein, the Watcher in the Woods, Interview with Vincent Price, the Legacy of Alfred Hitchcock, Chuck Jones-American Animator. $1.95

♦ **HEAVY METAL JULY 1980** Stories by Moebius, Druillet, & many others. $2.00

HISTORY OF THE SHADOW MAGAZINE The Men Who Cast the Shadow, Shadow index, the Golden Shadow, essays by Bob Sampson and Walter B. Gibson. A massive book with many cover photos of the Shadow pulps. $7.95

♦ **KING OF THE WORLD** Sorcery, Unmen, demons, magic, a wizard and beautiful women all wrapped up in a fantasy tale to obtain the Magic Sword to the King of the World. Drawn by Wallace Wood, color interiors. $4.00

MARVEL COMICS INDEX 8A Index to Captain America beginning with Tales to Suspense. Steranko cover. $5.50

MEDIASCENE 39 The art, story, & effects of the Black Hole. Craig Russell interview. Dr. Who. $1.95
40 A second issue of all poster art special. Art by Adams, Boyette, Miller,, Chaykin, Fabian, Williamson, Golden, Corben, Russell, and many others. $1.95
41 A 40 page look at the Empire Strikes Back. A 16 page color folio by Ralph McQuarrie with an interview, the Empire File: A dossier on the stars, interview with Irv Kershner, George Lucas: An Afterword on the future of the Star Wars series. Plus a look at Clash of the Titans, America's Classic Crimefighter: The Batman, Al Williamson return to the comic universe. $4.00

QUESTAR 7 A.E. Van Vogt interview, Conan art preview by Bill Stout & Ron Cobb, Forrest Ackerman, the Many Faces of Don Post Sr., 8 page pin-up section of Caroline Munro. $1.95

SUMMER DISCOUNT SALE

TO MAKE ROOM FOR ALL THE NEW INCOMING BOOKS, WE'VE DISCOUNTED THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS OF ITEMS. REFER TO PAST ADVETISMENTS AND CATALOGS FOR DESCRIPTIONS. SALE ITEMS HAVE BEEN MARKED 10% TO 70% OFF COVER PRICE. QUANTITIES ON SOME ITEMS A VERY LIMITED AND ARE SOLD ON A FIRST COME BASIS. THANK YOU.

TITLE/ORIGINAL COVER PRICE	SALE PRICE
ALIEN: THE ILLUSTRATED STORY $3.95	$3.15
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN $3.95	$3.00
A+PLUS 3,4, & 5 $1.00	.40 each
ARC $1.50	.75
AREIL 1 $5.95	$4.75
AREIL 2 & 3 $6.95	$5.55 each
ART FANTASTIQUE 1 $2.50	$2.00
CARTOONISTS & ILLUSTRATORS PORTFOLIO 3 $5.00	$3.50
COBBLESTONE 29 $1.50	.75
DRAGONFLAME $5.00	$4.00
EAGLESTAR $2.00	$1.00
FANFARE 2 $2.50	$1.75
FUNNYWORLD 17,18, & 19 $2.50	$1.50
THE GAZETEER $4.95	$4.00
ILLUSTRATED HARLAN ELLISON HARDCOVER $14.95	$10.00
ILLUSTRATED ROGER ZELAZNY $7.95	$5.55
NEAR MYTHS 1,2, & 3 $1.50	$1.00 each
SIMBA 2 $4.00	$2.80
SORCERERS $7.95	$5.55
IMAGINE 2,3, & 4 $1.50	.90 each
IMAGINE 5 & 6 $1.25	.75 each
STAR*REACH 12,13,14 $1.50	.90 each
STAR*REACH 15,16,17, & 18 $1.25	.75 each
MARVEL HULK CALENDAR 1979 $4.95	$1.00
HEAVY METAL 1979 $5.95	$1.50
TOLKEIN 1979 $4.95	$1.00
BEATLES FOREVER $1.50	.80
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS (Warren) $1.50	.75
FANTASY FILM PREVIEW BOOK $1.00	.50
HOUSE OF HORROR 19 & 20 $1.50	$1.00 each
INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION 1 $2.00	$1.20
MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL 4 BEATLES $1.50	$1.00
NATIONAL FILM COLLECTOR .75	.50
PHOTON 27 $2.25	$1.00
REEL FANTASY $1.25	.50
SCIENCE FANTASY FILM CLASSICS 2 & 3 $2.00	$1.20
TV CHARIOT 11 $1.50	.50
SOJOURN 1 & 2 $1.50	.75 each
ART & STORY 1 & 2 $2.00	.75 each

NOTE: THESE ITEMS CAN NOT BE APPLIED TOWARD THE 10% DISCOUNT ON ORDERS OVER $25.00 HAVING BEEN DISCOUNTED.

WHO DRAWS THE BATMAN?

AN INVESTIGATIVE REPORT BY GENE REED

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

Batman creator Bob Kane's Batman.

Who draws Batman?

Who drew Batman?

To answer the first question, you would quickly scan the credits on the splash pages of *Batman*, *Detective Comics*, or *The Brave and the Bold* and reply, "Irv Novick! Don Newton! Jim Aparo!" Many of you would certainly mention the recent masterwork of Marshall Rogers. Older fans remembering the sixties might recall the Neal Adams' Batman as he appeared in *The Brave and the Bold*. Others might recall less-favored artists such as Ross Andru and Mike Esposito, Bob Brown, Nick Cardy, Mike Sekowsky, and Frank Robbins. A few would get a wistful look in their eyes as they recalled the Batman as drawn by *Star Wars* artist (sic) Carmine Infantino during the middle sixties. Some older fans, many of them in the process of rearing little fans of their own, would call the above artists good but would be quick to agree that none of them can compare to Dick Sprang's work in the forties and fifties.

One of the most frustrating yet interesting aspects of studying and indexing comic books is trying to determine exactly who drew a particular story, especially when the strip is unsigned or even, as in the case of *Batman* and *Superman*, where the creator's name was signed while the art was obviously done by different artists from time to time. Most often, however, these artists worked on other strips during the same period and signed their names, thus giving examples that can be used for comparison and positive identification. Many of these "ghosts," however, almost buried their individual styles beyond recognition trying to imitate the accepted "style" for the strip.

Bob Kane made certain that his name appeared on the splash page of each story that featured his creation, The Batman. If Kane did not draw the strip, the ghost dutifully signed Kane's name on the splash page. In many cases, the Batman logo was a photostat from earlier stories and some of these stats had Kane's signatures on them already so that when Dick Sprang signed Bob Kane's name on the splash of "Ally Babble and the Four Tea Leaves" in *Batman* 34, Kane was doubly credited with the work.

How much solo work Bob Kane did on The Batman will probably never be known. He had a group of assistants, among them Jerry Robinson, who did most of the backgrounds and inks over Kane's layouts. Eventually, Robinson began doing the complete art on the stories. While Bob Kane's figures appeared stiff — a characteristic that dominated Kane's art even in the sixties — Robinson's figures had long legs and arms and seemed to stretch across the page.

According to *Amazing World of DC Comics* 4, Jerry Robinson began working with Bob Kane in 1939. Robinson continued drawing Batman stories through the forties. Examples of his cover drawings appeared in *Amazing World of DC* 4.

Jerry Robinson was not the only assistant Bob Kane had during the forties. Other artists included George Roussos, who drew *Air Wave* and inked Mort Meskin's pencils on a number of features in the forties; Lee Harris, another *Air Wave* artist who most likely worked on Batman while Roussos replaced him on *Air Wave*. Jack Burnley, who drew many early DC covers and pencilled the *Batman* Sunday newspaper strip in the forties, also pencilled several of Batman's early adventures in *World's Finest*. (See "Brothers in Law" in *World's Finest Comics* No. 8.) There were others who worked briefly on The Batman, but five artists—Charles Paris, Win Mortimer, Curt Swan, Jim Mooney, and Dick Sprang—were to continue drawing The Batman well into the sixties. A sixth suspected artist is Howard Sherman whose Batman work has not yet been confirmed.

Charles Paris was an inker with a smooth, polished style that was often used to highlight Dick Sprang's breathtaking pencils as well as give a uniform look to the pencils of the other Batman artists in the fifties and sixties. Paris inked many of the Batman stories in the forties and almost all of the stories in the fifties and early sixties. In addition to his work in *Detective Comics* and *Batman*, he inked most of Dick Sprang's pencils in *World's Finest Comics* in the late fifties and early sixties, a practice done for convenience according to Jack Schiff, the editor of the Batman stories. Sprang had moved to Arizona, and it was easier to have Charles Paris do the inking because he was around the office most of the time. After leaving Batman in 1964, Paris went on to ink *Metamorpho* over the pencils of Ramona Fradon, Joe Orlando, and Sal Trapani. Paris also did the finished art over Infantino's layouts in *The Brave and the Bold* No. 67 ("The Death of the Flash").

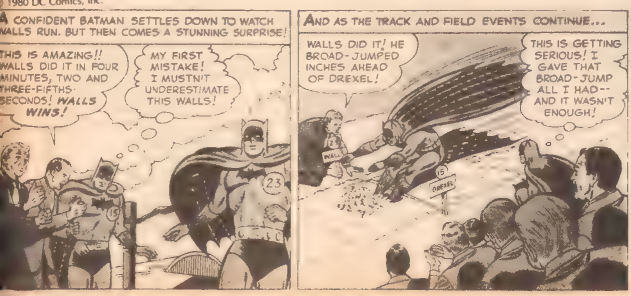
THEN... WITH THE THUG ALMOST WITHIN THEIR GRASP, DR. TSU INTERVENES!
VERY SORRY. KINDLY ACCEPT APOLOGIES. BUT THIS THUG WAS NOWHERE NEAR FATAL SHOT. COULD NOT BE MURDERER!
HEY! DR. TSU!
© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

Jerry Robinson, Kane's first assistant (and creator of the Joker) in a solo Batman effort.

Dick Sprang stands out as *the* Batman artist of the fifties. Sprang had the ability to draw a skyscraper in one panel and so convincingly put the reader atop it that anyone with acrophobia would be trembling from the effect of the art. When Sprang drew Batman and Robin swinging through the air, the reader could see that it was a lo-o-o-ong way down. Many of Sprang's stories have been reprinted in *Batman Annuals* and *80-Page Giants*. A good example of Sprang's pencils can be found in *World's Finest Comics* No. 101, "The Menace of the Atom-Master," reprinted in *World's Finest* No. 161.

Jim Mooney, known primarily for his work on Supergirl and later as inker of Spider-Man, also contributed to the Batman portfolio. His work can be found primarily in the Robin stories that appeared in *Star Spangled Comics* and a few stories that appeared in *Batman* and *Detective Comics*, especially in the early sixties. Mooney also took over *World's Finest* when Dick Sprang stopped drawing the book. Mooney admitted to having a shop operation in the sixties which explains why the inking of some of his work in that period fluctuates. The names of his assistants are unknown, but supposedly they were artists who were *not* doing other work for DC at the time. A good example of Mooney's Batman can be seen in "Robin, the Super Boy Wonder" from *Batman* 150, and "The Cat-Man Strikes Back" in *Detective Comics* No. 318.

Win Mortimer drew several Batman stories that appeared in *World's Finest Comics*. (See *World's Finest* 19-21 for Mortimer's Golden Age work.) Mortimer's biggest con-

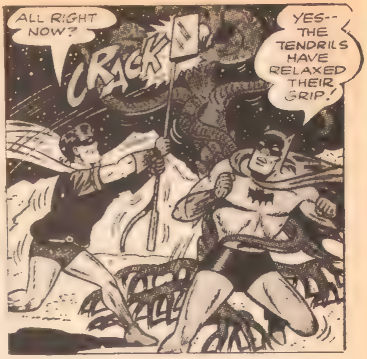

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.
A CONFIDENT BATMAN SETTLES DOWN TO WATCH WALLS RUN. BUT THEN COMES A STUNNING SURPRISE!
THIS IS AMAZING!! WALLS DID IT IN FOUR MINUTES, TWO AND THREE-FIFTHS SECONDS! WALLS WINS!
MY FIRST MISTAKE! I MUSTN'T UNDERESTIMATE THIS WALLS!
AND AS THE TRACK AND FIELD EVENTS CONTINUE...
WALLS DID IT! HE BROAD-JUMPED INCHES AHEAD OF DREXEL!
THIS IS GETTING SERIOUS! I GAVE THAT BROAD-JUMP ALL I HAD-- AND IT WASN'T ENOUGH!

An early example of Win Mortimer's Batman (*Batman* 70).

tribution to Batman and the entire DC line was drawing virtually all of DC's covers from the Superman and Batman comics from 1950-1955.

Howard Sherman supposedly drew several Batman stories in the forties, fifties, and sixties. As of yet, none of these have been positively identified, possibly because of Charles Paris's inking. Some early examples of Sherman's work can be seen throughout DC's mystery books in the fifties and sixties but a clearer representation of his style can be seen in the *Wyoming Kid* series in *Western Comics* and the *Congorilla* series in *Action* and *Adventure Comics*. Although there's no conclusive proof (i.e. a statement from Sherman himself) Sherman is most likely the ghost who pencilled "The Fight That Jolted Gotham City" in *Batman* No. 168.

Other artists appeared in the late forties and early fifties to replace those who had retired or gone to work for other companies. Sheldon Moldoff, who had drawn Hawkman in *Flash Comics* and Kid Eternity for the Quality Comics Group, began pencilling Batman adventures in the late forties. Moldoff's layouts and perspectives managed to show through, however. The best examples of his style are seen in the public service pages of the fifties and sixties. Moldoff did quite a bit of work for DC's crime titles, *Gang Busters* and *Mr. District Attorney*, in the early fifties. Moldoff also worked closely with Howard Purcell on the early issues of *Mr. DA*.



Sheldon Moldoff's version of the Batman (inked by Charles Paris. *Batman* 185).

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

For samples of Moldoff's Batman work, readers should check *Batman* No. 185. Except for the story drawn by Jim Mooney, the stories are pencilled by Moldoff. Moldoff's Batman is characterized by his Dick Tracy chin, and his supporting characters, especially the villains, who always looked more than a trifle insane. Occasionally, Moldoff would ink Sprang's pencils. The Sprang/Moldoff Batman has a sharper chin than the Sprang/Paris Batman.

Ray Burnley, a largely unknown artist who inked Curt Swan's pencils on most of the early Jimmy Olsen stories, inked Moldoff's pencils a few times. See "The Marriage of Batman and Batwoman" in *Batman* No. 122.

Curt Swan's Batman work was limited to a few stories in the early fifties and several covers in the late fifties after he replaced Win Mortimer as cover artist on many of the DC titles. The cover of *Detective Comics* No. 268 is typical of Swan's work. Swan drew several of the early Superman/Batman team-ups in the fifties and again in the middle sixties when Mort Weisinger became editor of *World's Finest Comics*. Today, of course, Curt Swan is the main artist on Superman.

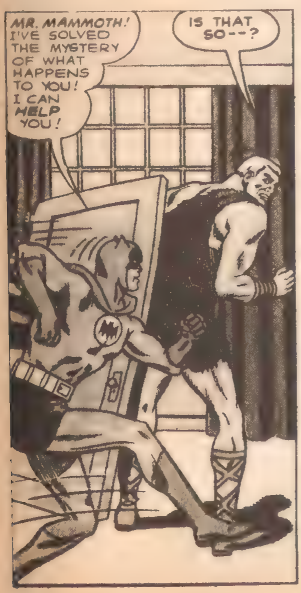
Even though Bob Kane drew few of the Batman stories in the fifties and early sixties, most of the work apparently passed through his hands. In many stories there are panels where people are stroking their chins for no apparent reason. There are panels where people have a hand raised for no apparent reason. When the reader takes a closer look, he can see that the hands don't really belong there, Bob Kane apparently drew them in after the artwork had been delivered to him.

E. Nelson Bridwell says that Bob Kane was retouching some Batman pages for Julius Schwartz because Schwartz was dissatisfied with the way a hand had been drawn. Kane redrew it. Schwartz said that it wasn't right and asked him to do it again. Kane redrew it a second time and again Schwartz said it wasn't right. Kane left the office and when he returned with the artwork, Schwartz said the art was perfect. When Schwartz asked him how he had managed to do it right, Bob Kane replied, "Murphy Anderson was in an office down the hall, and I got him to draw it for me."

Lew Schwartz is another "ghost" who appeared in the late forties and early fifties. Schwartz had a tendency to make all of his characters look as if they had been on a starvation diet for months. The reader suspected that if one of Schwartz's drawings turned sideways, it would disappear. Most of Schwartz's characters were drawn from either a full or three-quarter view to prevent this from happening. For all of his faults, however, Schwartz knew how to make his crooks look like crooks. All of his hoods had crooked noses. A prime example of his work is "The Joker's Journal" in *Detective Comics* No. 193. It appears as if Schwartz did most of his own inking. His style is best described as a cross between Dick Sprang and Jerry Robinson, and in a few stories it appears as if he may have inked Sprang's pencils.

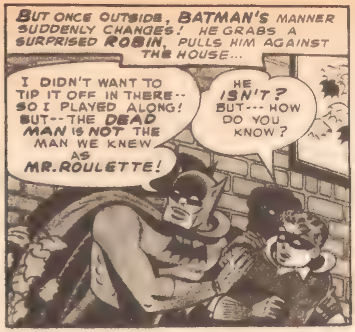
When Batman's "New Look" was established in 1964, Julius Schwartz added two new artists to the Batman ranks, Carmine Infantino and Joe Giella. Giella was made the regular inker on both *Batman* and *Detective Comics*, covering both Infantino's and "Bob Kane's" pencils. Exactly how much pencilling Bob Kane was doing at this time is unknown. It's possible that he was doing either very little or none, preferring instead to pass the assignments along to various ghosts.

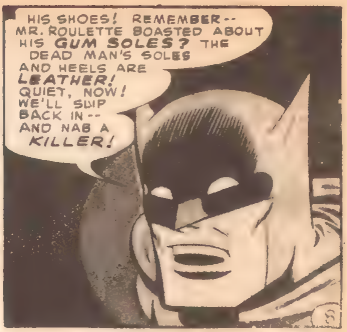
Joe Giella's inking style has always been rather dominant and realistic, and there is no doubt that his inking alone improved the quality of the artwork on Batman. Most likely Giella's inks were covering the pencils of Sheldon Moldoff and other artists who had worked on Batman. There is the possibility that Giella himself pencilled some stories. In the letter columns, not once



An example of the Batman art of Howard Sherman inked by Joe Giella. (*Batman* 168).

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.


BUT ONCE OUTSIDE, BATMAN'S MANNER SUDDENLY CHANGES! HE GRABS A SURPRISED ROBIN, PULLS HIM AGAINST THE HOUSE...
I DIDN'T WANT TO TIP IT OFF IN THERE-- SO I PLAYED ALONG! BUT--THE DEAD MAN IS NOT THE MAN WE KNEW AS MR. ROULETTE!
HE ISN'T? BUT--- HOW DO YOU KNOW?


HIS SHOES! REMEMBER-- MR. ROULETTE BOASTED ABOUT HIS GUM SOLES? THE DEAD MAN'S SOLES AND HEELS ARE LEATHER! QUIET, NOW! WE'LL SLIP BACK IN-- AND NAB A KILLER!

The art of Dick Sprang, perhaps the most prolific Batman artist (*Batman* 75.

does Julie Schwartz deny that Bob Kane drew any stories that carry his name, but at the same time not once does he credit Bob Kane with drawing them, even though he does give credit to the authors and inkers. The layouts change from time to time, but the inking of Giella makes the figures appear consistent. Giella continued inking Batman stories into the seventies.

Another inker introduced by Schwartz, one who is painfully obvious, is Sid Greene. Greene's inks were capable of hiding or disguising the pencils of almost any artist. Regardless of the layouts or figures, the faces are decidedly Greene's. In addition to his inking chores, there is the possibility that Greene's inks were used to disguise his own pencils on one or two stories. Greene's long association with action artist Gil Kane carried over into his inks on uncredited Batman artist Frank Springer who did several stories in *Detective Comics* and *Batman*. See "Mr. Freeze's Chilling Deathtrap" in *Detective Comics* No. 373 for an example of this combination. Springer's Batman work contains apparent Infantino swipes, leading the reader to believe that Infantino may have done some rough layouts for the story.

It is difficult to pinpoint many of the "ghosts." In most cases, the only way one can tell that different artists pencilled the story is because Bob Kane's signature is so different. DC was undergoing many editorial changes in the last half of the sixties as control of the company passed to Carmine Infantino. Bob Kane's work on Batman, and his name as well, was phased out. Although his name still appeared on the splash pages, it's doubtful that Bob Kane had anything at all to do with the Batman stories published in 1967. Much of the following is speculation, but in most cases the guesses can be supported by comparisons.

One of the most obvious ghosts appeared in *Batman* No. 192. Creig Fessel, who drew The Sandman and several covers for DC in the forties, pencilled "Dick Grayson's Secret Guardian." Joe Giella's inks gave the art some semblance to the "Bob Kane" mold, but the difference is there. Fessel also drew "The Flying Girl of Smallville" in *Superboy* No. 72 and inked several Jimmy Olsen stories in the early sixties.

Batman No. 195 is full of Infantino swipes, and this leads one to believe that Frank Springer pencilled this story. The last story in *Batman* No. 196, "The Purloined Parchment Puzzle," is obviously the work of someone other than Kane. The layouts and figures resemble the work of Jack Lehti whose art is most recently seen in *Our Army at War* No. 288. Lehti was the artist on the Crimson Avenger series in *Detective Comics* during the forties.

Chic Stone's entry in Jerry Bails's *Who's Who* credits him with drawing Superman in 1966. However, Stone not-so-obviously pencilled at least two Batman stories. The first identifiable one appears in *Batman* No. 197, "The Catwoman Sets Her Claws for Batman." Although Stone's pencils are almost totally smothered by Sid Greene's powerful inks, the box around the signature on the splash page gives it away. That, plus many similarities to Stone's work on Nemesis for ACG, effectively establishes him as the pencil artist. The second story that can be credited to Stone is "The Man Who Radiated Fear" in *Batman* No. 200. This time Joe Giella's inks alter the pencils to fit the Bob Kane mold. Unbelievers may check the last panel on page 7 of the story as testimony to Stone's pencilling.

Batman No. 201 features the pencilling of an artist familiar to everyone. This particular artist is one of the few to draw the same strip continuously for thirteen years, from its beginning until its end. Joe Certa, who brought "J'onn J'onzz, Manhunter from Mars" to artistic life, pencilled "Batman's Gangland Guardians."

Frank Springer, mentioned previously, pencilled issue 202's "Gateway to Death." And . . .lest some readers think that one of the truly great Batman artists is being slighted, it is hereby noted that Gil Kane pencilled the covers of *Batman* No. 178-180 and also illustrated "Batgirl's Costume Cut-Ups" in *Detective* No. 371.

Of course, many of Batman's adventures appeared in *The Brave and the Bold* where he was teamed with almost every other superhero at DC. Few were credited at the time, but *The Brave and the Bold* No. 150 lists them all.

So, the next time anyone asks, "Who drew Batman?", you can safely answer, "Almost every artist that's ever worked for DC!

*NOTE: This article is limited in scope for a reason. Mike Tiefenbacher and I have been trying to pin specific art credits on the Batman stories. Anyone who has some expertise in spotting "ghosts" is urged to help. We plan to publish the results in the future. This article and several similar ones are planned on other topics to generate interest in the project. —GR

Jim Mooney's interpretation of the Batman (*Batman* 150).

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

Guilty Fantasies

by Peter Gillis

Superman was going to commit suicide and came to see me.

He stood in front of me, sweat pouring down his face and beading up on his indestructible costume. "In my right fist I'm holding a chunk of Krypohite, and it's slowly killing me," he said in an oddly high voice.

"That doesn't make an awful lot of sense," I replied.

"Oh yes it does. You see, nobody can be considered really strong if he can't stand up to the things that hurt him. I can face bullets, but I've got no more courage than a piece of armor plate. What kind of hero is that? An ordinary joe who holds a hot poker in his hand, even though it burns him, is as strong as I am. I always give up before Kryptonite. Well, this time I'm going to stand up to it, or else."

He stared into my eyes, looking very pale and sick. We said nothing. After a few minutes, he slumped before my feet. I nudged him: nothing.

Macho idiot.

*

Superman was going to commit suicide and came to see me.

"I just wanted to clear something up before I go. You say you're fascinated by me, and yet you say you don't especially like me. Why is this?"

I put down my book. "Because you're a real mythic figure, Supes. But somehow you've gotten pegged as a superhero, and I think that's a mistake: you're a god. Men aren't supposed to strive to emulate you: there's no way they could approach you. No, you embody power, and you're the infinite source of power. You're the American God, complete power without external discipline."

"Is that why you reviewed *Oedipus in Disneyland*?"

"Uh-huh. Deep in their heart of hearts, little boys worship you as intensely as their capabilities allow. Super-Strength! Super-power!"

Superman knotted his brow. "But why don't you like me?"

"Oh, it's not that exactly," I replied, grinning. "It's just that I'm fascinated by heresy." I pulled a crucifix out from my cassock. He snarled and cowered in its gleam: he shrank and melted. Soon there was nothing left of him but his cloak, bearing his symbol: a snake inside an inverted pentagram.

All that stuff about it being an "S" was a lot of subterfuge.

*

Superman was going to commit suicide and he came to see me.

"But why?" I asked, shocked and upset.

"I'm *the* superhero, not just a superhero. I'm the original—"

"There are Doc Savage and the Shadow—"

"They're just heroes, and it's not the same. When I was the only superhuman around, I was satisfied to just bend steel girders, outpace trains and see through safes, you know. But when all these imitators showed up, my writers wanted to assert my primacy, so they kept making me more and more powerful, until it outstripped all reason. It's beyond enduring. I'm *grotesquely* powerful."

"What do you want, then?"

"Well, I'd really like them to wipe out all the other heroes, so I can be returned to my old Siegel-and-Shuster majesty. But it's just me against so many others, better written and drawn very often. And my conscience wouldn't let me. I've been a mockery of my original idea for years and years: maybe it's time I just faded."

He turned and rose up in flight. I noticed that he just barely cleared the apartment across the block. That heartened me for some reason.

*

Superman was going to commit suicide, and he came to see me.

"Why are you going to commit suicide, Supes?" I asked. I called him Supes: him and me's good buddies.

"They gave my dad and my arch-enemy top billing in my movie. I ask you, is that fair? There ain't no justice in this world." That's how he really talked, y'know.

"What are you gonna do?"

"Well I thought of shaving my head and going to Cambodia, or busting a trans-Atlantic dope ring by driving some cars real fast. Then I'd sell out my principles totally and think of nothing but money and act like an idiot in an overproduced film. I figure it's a good way of committing suicide."

"Frankly, I'd go with Cambodia. You know, with your head shaved, you'd look like Darkseid."

"Would I? Gee."

"Just remember how to spell 'Apocalypse', dammit!"

Superman was going to commit suicide and came to see me.

"Why? Why am I so absolutely miserable all the time time? Why is life so stupid and empty for me?"

I took out a book called *Turning Points* and read to him an essay called "Alien Monsters", by Joanna Russ:

"It seems to me that for the one quality—being invulnerable—every other quality has been given up...He can be fond of other people, in a sort of parental or protective way, and he can behave tenderly toward them—although he doesn't usually—but no one can be tender to *him* because that would mean he depended on someone, and depending on someone would mean he was weak. People admire him but they can't love him, and if you think for a minute, you'll see that he can't love anyone else, because love is possible only between equals and by definition he has no equals. He is a very lonely man...You see, the price you have to pay for absolute mastery of every situation is awful. It's the whole rest of life."

I looked up from the book (edited by

Damon Knight). Superman was looking as if someone had punched him in the stomach. He closed his eyes, and a super-tear (actually, quite an ordinary tear) trickled down his cheek.

Poor guy.

*

Superman was going to commit suicide and he came to me.

"The other night, I sat in my apartment, in my easy chair, stark naked. On the bed was my Superman suit; over the chair was my Clark Kent business suit. If I put one on, I was Superman; the other, I was Clark Kent. But I had neither on. Who was I then? Who was I?"

I had no answer for him. He waited for me to say something, then turned and walked to the door. There he got into trouble: his three-foot-long shoes nearly caused him to trip over the jamb, and his baggy polka-dot pants caught on the knob.

I liked the greasepaint, though.

*

Superman was going to commit suicide, and he came to see me.

"Why?" I asked.

"I just read in the paper that a little kid tied a towel around his neck and jumped off the top of an apartment building, thinking he was me. I shouldn't be around if I cause kids to do that."

"Oh come on, Superman, you're a work a fiction, a work of the imagination. It's just not fiction's *business* to teach practical reality. Society, mothers, fathers, teachers have a basic responsibility for teaching reality, that if you jump off a building, you'll probably kill yourself. Your business is to stimulate the imagination, to cause it to develop, and *their* responsibility to develop common sense in their kids. If they abdicate their responsibility, and then try to blame this thing on you, they're guilty twice."

Superman straightened up as if a weight had left his shoulders. "You're right. These censors and critics are just trying to impoverish the imagination because I guess they'd rather the kids didn't think at all! How can I repay you?"

"You can start by firing your writers. You haven't been written right in thirty years."

*

Superman was going to commit suicide and came to see me.

I pulled out my .357 Magnum and shot him.

The bullets went right through him.

Superman's invulnerable all right: but that's only because there's nothing there to hurt.

*

Superman was going to commit suicide and came to see me.

I pulled out my .357 Magnum and shot him.

The damn bullets bounced off and hit me instead. Superman is too much a part of us to ever get rid of him without wounding ourselves.

*

this is for george reeves

Interested in contributing to *Comics Feature?*

We'd like *Comics Feature* to be *your* magazine. If you're interested in submitting articles or artwork, please send all writing samples, articles or artwork to our editorial address, with the necessary return postage. All submissions will be given sincere consideration. Please allow four weeks for a reply.

Advertising Rates: Full-page—$60.00

No other sizes available. All ads must be clean and in proportion to 8½"×11". We reserve the right to refuse any ad we feel is not suitable for publication.
Ad deadline: the 10th of every month.

There's Nothing Like the Real Thing!

by Richard Howell

Perhaps you readers have tendencies toward speculative investment but feel that silver and gold prices are too unstable. Or that you'd like to learn and appreciate the techniques of the masters of comic art, but that art school is too indirect and expensive a course to that end. Or merely that you'd like to lay claim to a particular episode in comics history that affected you particularly significantly. One answer to any of these desires is collecting original comic art.

For the uninitiated, the term, "original art" refers to the actual drawing from which the comic strip or page in question was photostatted and eventually printed. Comic art is generally on bristol board, in India ink, and considerably larger than its printed version. Most comic book art before 1968 is twice the size of its counterpart printed page size (13" x 18"), after that most publishers switched the original page size to 1½ times the printed page size (or 10"x 15"). Some companies gave their artists considerable leeway in choosing the original page size at which they felt most comfortable, so these size specifications tend to vary somewhat. Comic strip originals are subject to even greater variance than comic book pages. Some strips are produced barely above printed size, while Russ Manning's *Star Wars* Sunday pages, for instance, are huge (2' x 3').

There are also other inconstant aspects of originals. Sometimes covers or splash pages have the title or logo lettering (which is usually photostat material) removed. In the case of the black and white magazines (*Creepy, Savage Sword of Conan,* etc.) the original pages more often than not sport tonal effects (grey ink wash, magic marker, etc.), while color magazine work (*The Hulk!, Marvel Super Specials*) have their pages rendered in full color. However, sometimes in these magazines, the lettering (and sometimes the tones or the coloring) is all done on a separate tissue or acetate overlay. Gene Colan's *Star-Lord* pages (*Marvel Super Special* #10), for instance, were not inked, as Tom Palmer inked and color-painted them on separate sheets of paper, via lightbox. In these rare cases, two sets of pages can be available from the same magazine—one the published pages and the other set the original pencils. It is always wise to be alert to these myriad deviances in the guidelines of your prospective art collecting hobby—and it never hurts to ask dealers specific questions as to size, overlays, media, etc.—especially if only certain styles or pieces will be satisfactory to you.

SOME OF THE REASONS FOR IT

There are many reasons for collecting original art. First:

1) FIDELITY. There is no printing process in the world that can reproduce the textures and subtleties of any drawing or painting up to the level of the original. Compare it to listening to your favorite songs being played on a record on a poor stereo and then on a good stereo and then, the same songs being performed in person by the same artist. The basics are roughly identical but the genuine article yields so much more appreciation to the accomplishments of the art and the talent that went into it. This is becoming increasingly true nowadays, when paper quality continues to decline, as does the expertise of the engravers. As the quality of the printed version becomes worse and worse, consequently the original appears better and better.

2) EDUCATION. The second reason for collecting original art, which is not altogether disassociated from the first reason, is that original art pages or panels are the best possible indicator of (and guide to using) various techniques of inking or shading. Also, if the piece has been published, they are also the best model sheets for seeing how those effects succeed in print. Professionals have a studied expertise in knowing which scale layouts will appear sufficiently detailed or spacious on the reduced printed page, regardless of how over-or-underdone they seem on the oversize originals. In addition to this, it is frequently difficult to determine whether effects with white ink, scratchboard, ink wash, craftint, and so forth were used or even whether the artist used a brush or pen for inking, from the printed page. To any comic artist interested in broadening his or her breadth of craft, original art collecting is practically an art school course.

An example of the sketches found on the backs of original comic art. This one is by Dave Cockrum.

3) INVESTMENT. Investment interest in all forms of popular art has soared over the last decade, and this definitely includes our great original American artform—comics. As might be expected, the general public's acceptance of the collectability of comic strip art far exceeds that of their appreciation of comic book art, yet the increase is steady in both fields nonetheless. For instance, well into the 1960s, King Features Syndicate sent *Prince Valiant* original pages (by Harold Foster, of course) to any individual who donated $10 to some predesignated charity. Today it is impossible to buy one of Foster's *Valiants* for less than $500.00, and certain pages have excalated will into the multiple thousand range. Considering both Foster's preeminence in the field and the historical value of *Valiant* (several of the earlier pages are in the custody of museums and universities), this is emphatically not an instance of an inflated, trendy, market-value distortion, but rather one of the primary examples of the true investment value of comic art. Of similar stature to investors in the comic strip art market have been Herriman, Kelly, and McCay.

In the comic book field, artwork by Golden Age greats like Mort Meskin, Simon and Kirby, and Lou Fine has at least doubled in the past five years, with no immediate end in sight. Pages by Kirby, Adams, and Ditko, among others, from the 1960s have appreciated in market value at a consistant rate, and certain new "fan-favorite" artists, such as John Byrne or Mike Golden, have caught on in the buyer's market to such an extent that some of their work has more than

© 1980 DC Comics, Inc.

I'LL RUSH HER TO A HOSPITAL! BUT HOW NICE SHE FEELS IN MY ARMS, EVEN IF SHE ISN'T THE SAME LOIS I MARRIED!
LATER, WHEN LOIS COMES TO, AN EMOTIONAL STORM RISES WITHIN THE ACTION ACE...
OH, SUPERMAN! HOW CAN I THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME... AGAIN? I'M SUCH A PEST TO YOU!
JUST LIKE MY LOIS WAS. BUT I LOVED THAT "PEST"! THIS GIRL LOOKS LIKE HER... TALKS LIKE HER... ACTS LIKE HER! MAYBE I'M CRAZY, BUT I'M GOING TO ASK HER.
LOIS, MY DARLING! WILL YOU MARRY ME?
OH, SUPERMAN! I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK ME! THE ANSWER IS YES!
EASY, MISS LANE! YOU MUSTN'T GET TOO EXCITED!
BUT AS SUPERMAN LEAVES THE HOSPITAL, HE MEETS SUPERMAN!
I'LL MAKE THE WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS AND... ULP! I FORGOT ABOUT THIS WORLD'S SUPERMAN!
GREAT KRYPTON! WHO ARE YOU?

What lurks under the white ink? Only the collector knows. In this "imaginary" Superman story, the big "S" throws Lois into a tizzy by proposing, and the nurse warns Lois. Underneath the nurse's mundanely phrased solicitations, however, it reads: "Easy, Miss Lane! Your heart is beating like a drum solo!

tripled in price over the last two years. In any speculator's viewpoint, any commodity that appreciates that much that *fast* is ripe for exploitation.

4) DISPLAY. But even if you're neither an artist nor an investor, collecting original art may prove attractive for the same reason you might collect comics themselves: you may want pieces of original art for keepsakes, sentimental value, or just because you enjoy owning them. Within each comic collector lurks an insatiable packrat anyway, and collecting original art has unique rewards to offer even the most staunch non-collector. For one thing, comic art is quite decorative, and reflects the general comic fan's interests while still fulfilling the more practical purpose of filling space on his or her walls. Displaying a page of original art by a favorite artist, or featuring a favorite scene or character is an individualized statement of one's preference in media and within that medium. In addition, one dealer reports a growing trend among professional tradesmen, doctors, etc. to decorate their offices with some particular original which pertains to their profession, such as a *Blondie* with Dagwood at the doctor's office. Also, for some collectors, owning a certain page establishes a "claim" to certain favorite issues, artists, or happenings. Like all memorabilia, comic art establishes a special link between the significance of the item and the owner.

Plus there are numerous unexpected pleasures which originals can yield: some artists (such as Nick Cardy or Werner Roth) designed their pages in non-reproducable blue pencil, while some others (Caniff in the early days, or Marshall Rogers for instance) used blue watercolor wash technique on their pages for the purpose of indicating to their inkers or engravers where they wanted the Ben Day shading. Either of these effects give the original the charm of an unfinished drawing. Comics historians might also be interested in certain other "extras" intermittently provided by original pages: White-out corrections abound on comic pages, and some of them can be very interesting (One can wonder why the background of the cover of *Fantastic Four* #67 was ordered eliminated, or whose attacks of good taste spurred the dialogue revisions in *Superman* #214, or the somewhat less obscene grabs Ben Grimm made for Marvel Girl on the corrected page for *FF* #28), and one can learn much about the individual contributions to certain comics by inspecting the originals. (It is a rare piece of art from the "Lee and Kirby" team days which does not include directions in the margins for pacing, suggested (and generally implemented) captions and dialogue, plus assorted data on background, motivations, and so forth. Judging from the information on some of the *X-Men* originals allegedly only "laid out" by Kirby, the nature of Lee's contribution is hard to determine. Certain other pencillers, such as Colan and Smith, are similarly full of suggestions.)

Finally, one can never tell when an original will contain some surprise totally unrelated to the production of the comic book or strip. Dave Cockrum's pages are overrun with cartoons one of which is printed here. In another example, one sequence drawn by Cockrum in which Professor X was surprised by a Sentinel emerging from the water below his fishing craft was backed with a takeoff on the "Jaws" paperback cover featuring a fanged Sentinel in place of the great white you-know-what. Also, some of the plot suggestions are obviously never meant to be taken seriously, but are entertaining nonetheless. (Some of Walt Simonson's suggested dialogue for the *Rampaging Hulk* #2 was too salacious to see print there—or here! And certain revisions in the proper form of Mr. Mind's mad chortles (in *Shazam!*) have to be seen to be believed.)

SOME STRAIGHT TALK

So there are many reasons for collecting original art, and the "collectability" of a piece can vary greatly from buyer to buyer. In general, though, pages with the title character(s) on it are of greater marketability than one without. Also, certain artists can become identified with certain characters, and there is a resultant difference in demand between pages by those artists of those characters and pages they have done using other characters. A Neal Adams Deadman page, for instance, will be more marketable than an Adams page utilizing say, Supergirl. Also, covers and splash pages of comic books tend to run higher in price than "storytelling" pages due to the former's poster value, while with few exceptions (some Fosters, McManuses, or McCays, for example) comic strips recognize no such distinctions.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that such terms as "collectability" and "marketability" need not dictate the parameters of anyone's collections or reasons for collecting. Unless one is collecting strictly for investment purposes, the value of a piece of original art should be judged by what it means to *you*: what you would be willing to pay to have it, what you think you might learn from it, and what extent you think that your life might be enriched and your sensibilities nourished, by the possession of whatever piece you're considering. As with comics collecting itself, collecting original comic art can be a rewarding hobby, if pursued with an understanding of the marketplace and a clear, responsible set of goals.

NAMING SOME NAMES

With the growing awareness of original comic art as a "collectable", as well as the increasing availability of contemporary artwork, the practice of dealing originals has become more widespread and standardized

than ever before. A short list of some selected dealers follows:

RUSS COCHRAN (P.O. Box 469, West Plains, MO 65775; 417-256-2226) deals mainly in more prestigious comic art these days. He presides over the EC original art auctions, in addition to publishing the *Graphic Gallery* catalogue intermittently. GG features available work by Barks, Foster, Herriman, Raymond, and several Golden Age comic book artists. Cochran has many years of successful dealing to his credit, although now he seems to be consciously limiting his trade to the $100-(and-up)-per-piece minimum inventory (and clientele).

COLLECTOR'S SHOWCASE (6763 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood CA 90028; 213-467-3296) is a monthly 20-page auction catalogue through which one may bid for a large quantity of items, either by mail or by phone. Comic art is included, naturally, as are animation cells, comic books, newspaper strips, pulps, and assorted paraphernalia. The auction atmosphere may add some thrills to your collecting, and the stock is always surprising (a "Gertie the Dinosaur" animation drawing last time).

DICK COMMER (P.O. Box 445, Wheatly Heights, Long Island NY 11798; 516-643-8279) runs Cartoonerville, a former gallery-and-shop, now just a shop. Commer's stock is extremely eclectic and covers nearly every aspect of comic art including magazine cartoons and animation cells. He's one of the few dealers who markets his stock with gambits like seasonal sales, and has a particularly good stock of Robbins' *Johnny Hazzard*s and esoteric items like Foster's pencil "roughs" for Murphy's *Prince Valiant*.

TONY DISPOTO (P.O. Box 425, Lodi, NJ 07644; 212-781-3335) is one of the best informed dealers in the business. In general, there is nothing that Dispoto does not have in stock, and you can be sure that he knows all the facts behind the piece, too. Dispoto has dealer arrangements with Marshall Rogers, Neal Adams and Jim Starlin, as well as a healthy stock of comic book pages, comic strips and paintings.

ROGER MCCLANNEN (2104 Arapahoe Drive, Lafayette, IND 47905; 317-474-0379) has a good, fast-changing selection of lower-priced pages, and his stock is an ideal one through which to get started in collecting originals. He has distribution arrangements with Gene Day, Don Newton, Mike Zeck, and Vince Colletta.

JOE PARENTE (108-30 Ascan Ave, Forest Hills, NY 11375; 212-263-5296) owns the Little Nemo Shop and Gallery which publishes a catalogue of originals each year. Parente has a huge stock, covering paintings, magazine illustrations, lithographs, and comic art. His stock is so varied that naming any specialties would be slighting hundreds of others, although he does have direct contact with artists such as Gray Morrow, and has the largest stock of Caniff originals this side of military intelligence.

MIKE RAUB and ED VIA (97 Woodmere, Stamford, Ct 06906; 203-324-4529) deal primarily in comic book art from the last ten or fifteen years and have a good stock of all major comics craftsmen from that period. They have an exclusive dealer agreement with John Byrne.

STU REISBORD (408 Bickmore Drive, Wallingford, PA 19086; 215-879-1292) is the owner of Cartoon Carnival and has a good varied stock of comic book and comic strip art (somewhat heavier on the strips), which he advertises regularly (in *The Buyer's Guide*, *Chapters*, and elsewhere) and shows at conventions. Reisbord is knowledgeable, and has direct arrangements with Ross Andru, Gene Colan, and Dick Giordano. He has a particularly good stock of work by Leonard Starr, Al Capp and Gus Arriola. □

Comic Strips

When Worlds Collide

by Carol B. Kalish

There's only that open cistern over there.
Precisely the sort of thing I mean . . . Be very careful now . . . Just follow O'Malley.
You realize how lucky you are, Barnaby, when you see the perils that continually confront other children who haven't got Fairy Godfathers watching over them . . .
Hey! Look out, Mr. O'Malley!
CROCKETT JOHNSON Copyright 1943 Field Publications
Cushlamochree!

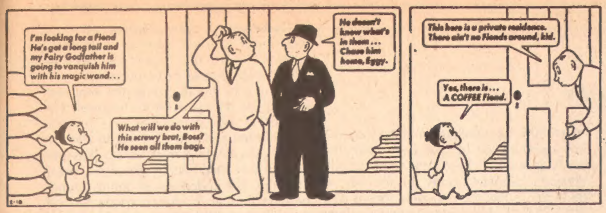
© Field Publications, 1943

Imagine that your ordinary placid existence is suddenly invaded by a supernatural creature: a ghost, perhaps, or some other apparition from a child's fantasy. Imagine further that this being somehow convinces you that it is a perfectly normal, indeed indispensable adjunct to your life. Finally, try to imagine the repercussions that would result if you and your hobgoblin not only ignored the unusual nature of its visitation but insisted that the rest of the world treat it as a commonplace as well. If you can envision such a bizarre scenario, then you've come close to recreating the world of one of the most unusual and underappreciated fantasy comic strips, *Barnaby*.

The *Barnaby* strip recounts the adventures of the title character, a young boy growing up in Middle America during the 1940's. Barnaby's rather ordinary life, however, is disrupted by the arrival and subsequent antics of his invisible fairy godfather, Mr. O'Malley, a somewhat shady individual who's half bunko artist and half ineffectual magician. Their adventures—if such mundane activities as playing with dogs, growing victory gardens, and exploring the neighborhood haunted house can be so described—center around Barnaby's attempts to convince the adult world (i.e. his parents and their friends) that Mr. O'Malley and his supernatural associates are every bit as real as it is.

Donald Leisk, under the alias of Crockett Johnson, created *Barnaby* in April of 1942 under the auspices of Field Publications. He worked on the strip until late 1946 at which time he surrendered the creative reins to a series of syndicate ghosts in order to devote more time to his growing involvment with children's books. Although the storyline remained the same, much of the strip's vitality left with Leisk. Field dropped the strip in 1952 due to declining circulation. A short-lived revival attempt under Leisk in 1962 failed to generate sufficient interest for the strip to be reborn.

Barnaby's readers can enjoy the strip on several levels ranging from that of a straightforward adventure series catering to the interests of children to that of one of the most sophisticated humor strips that ever appeared in the comic section. Leisk constructs his stories so that children are attracted not only by the child-hero with whom they can easily identify, but also by the carefully planned dollops of pratfall humor generated by the shenanigans of


I'm looking for a Fiend. He's got a long tail and my Fairy Godfather is going to vanquish him with his magic wand...
What will we do with this screwy brat, Boss? He sees all them bugs.
He doesn't know what's in them... Chase him home, Eggy.
This here is a private residence. There ain't no Fiends around, kid.
Yes, there is... A COFFEE Fiend.

Mr. O'Malley. The constant introduction into the storyline of a stream of imaginary characters, such as ghosts, leprechauns and giants, also adds to a child's perception of the strip as nothing more than a visualization of a fantastic daydream. Leisk consistently avoids the extreme forms of cerebral fantasy—the surreal tone of *Krazy Kat* or the mindnumbing visual maneuverings of *Little Nemo*—in favor of keeping the stories simple enough so that even a very young child experiences no difficulty in following the plot.

To an adult reader alert enough to assess the subtle humorous possibilities contained in the intersection and collision of two conflicting world views, one a child's vision of magic and fantasy and the other our own far more prosaic existence of time clocks and traffic laws, Leisk unveils the deeper meaning of Barnaby's adventuring. Much of the humor and whimsy that are the strip's trademarks arise from Leisk's skilled deadpanned juxtapositioning of these divergent world views and from Barnaby's constantly thwarted efforts to reconcile our world's insistence that Mr. O'Malley and his ilk have no place in the real world with Mr. O'Malley's unshakable conviction that he not only exists but holds a valid place in our society. Leisk's comic genius lies in his insistence that only the reader is cognizant of these divergent viewpoints so only he is able both to anticipate the probable confusion that will result when the real and the fantastic collide and to appreciate the irony implicit in the subsequent misunderstandings and inappropriate responses that the collision elicits. This reader omniscience provides the foundation of *Barnaby*'s elusive charm.

But Leisk goes further. He highlights the irony both through the use of subtle double entendres which tend to pinpoint the ironic aspects of the situation and by inverting the characterizations of the various personalities of the strip. Almost all of the fantasy characters are invested with well-designed, well rounded personalities while the real world characters—parents, ward bosses, and criminals are never more than two-dimensional. Since the imaginary characters are better defined, hence more real, than the actual inhabitants of our world, the resistance to their acceptance as valid members of society is rendered even more incongruous than before. Yet Leisk does not content himself with just milking the humor from a situation when unreal characters are more believable than the real ones. He offers one more twist by emphazing the general incompetence of the supernatural creatures when they do try to participate in the real world.

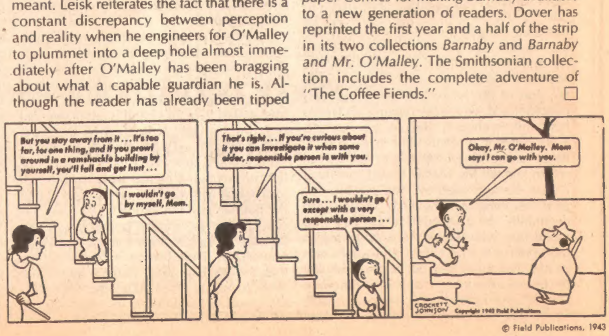
Take, for example, one of *Barnaby*'s most famous episodes, "The Coffee Fiend" adventure which ran from January 19 to February 27, 1943. The story is simple: Barnaby, his friend Jane, and Mr. O'Malley explore the local haunted house. In the process they stumble upon an old acquaintance of O'Malley's: Gus, a somewhat cowardly ghost with thespian inclinations. Hidden in the house are a couple of criminals who've hidden a hijacked shipment of coffee in the basement. Barnaby's intrepid band of explorers manage to subdue the thieves while the police, arriving in a typical deus ex machina manner, cart the crooks off to jail. This bald recital of the plot reads like a rather bland children's adventure, but Leisk manages to transform what seems like a boring story into a compedium of sophisticated delights.

Leisk's humorous touch is apparent at the story's inception. Barnaby's simple request for permission to explore the haunted house is transformed into a comedy of errors as his mother is misled into believing that Barnaby will be accompanied by an appropriate guardian while Barnaby believes that his invisible and imaginary mentor, Mr. O'Malley, has just received the parental accolade. Only the reader, already party to the knowledge that Barnaby's world view is at odds with that of his mother, is aware of the discrepancy between what a character says and what the other characters believe was meant. Leisk reiterates the fact that there is a constant discrepancy between perception and reality when he engineers for O'Malley to plummet into a deep hole almost immediately after O'Malley has been bragging about what a capable guardian he is. Although the reader has already been tipped off that Mr. O'Malley is not the most competent person in the world and is therefore intellectually prepared for the pratfall, the comic success of the sequence is achieved in part just because the reader *can* anticipate Mr. O'Malley's fall from grace as well as the mishap and O'Malley's subsequent inability to achieve his own rescue. The irony present in a situation where the guardian must be rescued by the very children he claimed to be protecting adds the final fillip of humor.

This tri-partite approach to humor—wry dialog, comic irony, and humorous misapprehensions of meaning—forms Leisk's approach to comedy. Throughout Barnaby's adventures Leisk maneuvers his characters into situations which are built upon some key misunderstanding of reality. O'Malley invites Gus, the ghost, to stay in Barnaby's house, unaware that Barnaby's mother might not be broadminded enough to appreciate the honor. Barnaby and O'Malley overlood the presence of the hijackers not because they don't see them, but because they have managed to convince themselves that they are really looking for supernatural coffee fiends and not normal crooks. The reader's appreciation of the irony and the witty dialog produces a powerful comic device.

Leisk's contribution to comics should not be undervalued. Not only did he provide hours of enjoyment through the adventures of *Barnaby*, but he introduced to comics the first use of irony as a tool for comedy. Although it had long been utilized as such by writers, especially among the classic children's fantasists like Edgar Eager and E. Nesbitt, comics had avoided the device until Leisk. He proved, through the early success of *Barnaby* and the high regard in which the strip was held by comics editors throughout the country, that readers are not only attentive and intelligent but are more than willing to be entertained through sophisticated banter and subtle humor. *Barnaby* is, and always will be, the thinking man's comic strip.

Special thanks must go to Dover Books and to *The Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics* for making *Barnaby* available to a new generation of readers. Dover has reprinted the first year and a half of the strip in its two collections *Barnaby* and *Barnaby and Mr. O'Malley*. The Smithsonian collection includes the complete adventure of "The Coffee Fiends." □


But you stay away from it... It's too far, for one thing, and if you prowl around in a ramshackle building by yourself, you'll fall and get hurt...
I wouldn't go by myself, Mom.
That's right... If you're curious about it you can investigate it when some older, responsible person is with you.
Sure... I wouldn't go except with a very responsible person...
Okay, Mr. O'Malley. Mom says I can go with you.
CROCKETT JOHNSON
Copyright 1943 Field Publications

© Field Publications, 1943

End Notes
by Peter Sanderson

Remember Red Kryptonite? That weird variant of good old regular Green Kryptonite that always did strange things to Superman, like taking away his powers or giving him amnesia or splitting him into two people or giving him an ant's head or turning him into a Kryptonian version of Cecil the Seasick Sea Serpent? (I didn't make any of these up, readers: look them up for yourselves.) Well, you always thought that Red Kryptonite only affected Kryptonians, right? This is not true. Other comic book characters can be affected by Red K (as it is affectionately called) and indeed have been. Why, there have even been some notable recent cases.

Just look at recent issues of *Iron Man* and *The Avengers*, for example. Remember how Tony Stark became an alcoholic after Whitney Frost left him and after he learned SHIELD was buying up the stock of his company? Yes, I suppose we can see how these things could drive a man to drink, except that Stark has lost women he loved before (Remember Janice Cord, among others?) and his company too (Remember Senator Byrd? Or Midas?) without doing so. In fact Stark/Iron Man had long been characterized as someone who kept fighting no matter what the odds: the archetypal Iron Man scene is of Iron Man painfully but courageously crawling towards an electric socket to recharge himself before either his heart gives out or the Mandarin blasts him into disconnected molecules. It could be that Stark could only lose a girlfriend and company so many times (sounds a bit silly, doesn't it?) before he finally broke down, but we weren't told in the story why these losses affected Stark more than past ones. His motivation for turning alcoholic was unclear. Diagnosis: Red Kryptonite at work.

Red K is all over the place. Remember the Scarlet Witch telling Ms. Marvel how she wanted herself and the Vision to have children? Instead of telling Wanda that it should be blindingly obvious that androids can't father children, Ms. Marvel tells her that having children is stupid and an unliberated thing to do. Huh? Since when did Ms. Marvel start thinking that way? (Feminists don't have children, it seems.) Well, Ms. Marvel shouldn't have said that because by the end of the issue she's been told she's pregnant and we see her burying her face in her hands in anguish. (Becoming a mother is a punishment, it seems.) The Wasp and the Beast run out to get lobotomies so they can return and tell Ms. Marvel how wonderful it is that she got raped by long distance (the next best thing to being there, it seems) and eventually she gives birth to the man who raped her, with whom she falls in love. (I didn't make *that* up either.) Oh, yes, he tells us that he courted her, but he also adds that he brainwashed her into loving him with Daddy's machines, so it is, in effect, a rape. So off Ms. Marvel goes to limbo with her lover/child: an Oedipus complex has not only come to life but has been given the story's approval. Where *is* the Comics Code when it's needed? Daddy, by the way, is Immortus, whom the story describes as (a) a villain, (b) another rapist via brainwashing devices, and (c) dead, all in blatant violation of the texts of the last several Immortus stories.

The Untold Legend of the Batman turned out to be a Red Kryptonite story too, although that fact was obvious as soon as Batman started getting headaches in issue 1. So an explosion turned the Batman into a schizophrenic who went around tearing up his father's costume and writing threatening notes to himself, and all it took to cure him was a pep talk from Robin wearing that same costume? I have a feeling that psychologists would get a good laugh out of that. Supposedly, the schizophrenia released all of the Batman's resentment at not being able to lead a normal life. *What* resentment? It wasn't mentioned in *Legend* 1 or 2. In how many stories has the Batman even hinted that he would prefer just being Bruce Wayne? Perhaps the *Legend* plot would make more sense had it come right after the Batman's break-up with Silver St. Cloud, but that is already long past history. Besides, what makes a hero, especially a superhero, heroic, is his ability to master a situation, to take command of himself and others, and to see the truth clearly. He can have doubts and weaknesses, but he should not be just one step away from outright insanity. (Yes, the Shadow is a hero, too, but he is not the kind of idealized, inspirational figure a superhero like the Batman is.) The Batman may be driven and obsessed, but not psychotic: if he is on the edge of madness at all, then surely he is firmly on the safe side of that edge. To turn the Batman temporarily insane is to reduce his stature as one of comics' leading heroes; moreover, the way in which mental illness is treated in the story irresponsibly trivializes the seriousness of such disorders.

There are problems in providing credible motivations elsewhere in *Legend* as well. The silent sequence in which Commissioner Gordon, confronted by the vigilante he has been hunting—the Batman—lowers his gun and shakes Batman's hand is admirable, but only the first half is justified by the story. Yes, one can see how Gordon could not bring himself to shoot a man who intends him no harm and merely seeks to carry out justice his own way, but surely nothing that the Batman said to Gordon could have persuaded him to drop his opposition to vigilantism so swiftly. Why the sudden, eager handshake? Did Gordon suddenly realize that the Batman acted out his own inner wish: to pursue criminals without the necessary legal restrictions? If so, shouldn't we have been shown he had that wish?

Then there is Gordon's daughter, Barbara, alias Batgirl (an odd name for a full-grown *woman*.). I wish that *Legend* had taken the opportunity to make sense out of her origin. Barbara was introduced as the mousiest-looking of librarians, who, however, was secretly taking martial arts lessons on the side, and was planning to alter her image radically by turning up at a masquerade party in a tight-fitting, glamorous Batgirl costume. She ended up becoming a superheroine through a chance encounter with Batman and Killer Moth, and transformed her whole everyday personality as well, becoming a highly attractive, forceful and extroverted congresswoman. Now just how did we get from the original Barbara Gordon to the present day version, and is it really credible that a martial arts expert who slid so easily into becoming a superheroine could ever have been so consciously dowdy-looking and introverted? Was Commissioner Gordon a particularly repressive father who imposed an image on his daughter that she secretly rebelled against, and that becoming Batgirl finally gave her the courage to shake off? It's a situation worth investigating, but *Legend* just recounts the known facts without illuminating them.

Whereas the *World of Krypton* mini-series recounted a life story—Superman's father Jor-El's—that built over all three issues to a literally cataclysmic climax, *Legend* covers the drama of its central character's life story in its first issue, which is therefore the series' strongest (the Byrne art further lifts this issue above the other two). The second and third issues are reduced basically just to giving facts about secondary elements of the Batman mythos, most of which come as no surprise to longtime readers.

It is interesting, though, to examine the way in which certain elements of the Batman's own life story work. It strains credibility to have young Bruce Wayne brought up by Mrs. Chilton, the mother of his parents' murderer: coincidences that serve no purpose other than obvious, cheap irony are to be condemned. I suspect it was also a mistake to have the Wayne's murders turn out to be ordered by gangster Lew Moxon. Like the conspiracy theorists for real life assassinations, whichever writer dreamed this up must have felt there *had* to be a reason for the Wayne's deaths. Yet how more unnerving it would have been if the Waynes had died merely as a result of a mugging, merely by a bad turn of fortune. Then we would realize that *any* child could have lost his parents the way young Bruce Wayne did. Wayne then takes on the role (and costume) of his father to avenge him. This is the Batman: a being who was thrust from the blissful innocence of childhood and the care of loving parents into the isolation, responsibilities, and anguish that comes with adulthood by a cruel fate working through criminals, on whom he forever wrecks vengeance in his own name, those of other victims of crime, and those who are yet untouched by the world's evils. To read *Legend* 1 is to re-experience some of the power of this concept.

NMI

The only three letters you need to know for quality distribution

For dealer information, contact:

NEW MEDIA/IRJAX
12345 Starkey
Largo, FL 33543
(800) 237-5991